

# THE ASYLUM

The Quarterly Journal of the  
Numismatic Bibliomania Society

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*"A book's first life, it is true, depends upon its contents, but two or three years after publication the pagination, the print, the paper, the cover, and the shape of the book begin to attract, and year by year they attract more and more until the book attains the glory of a Chinese vase in which there is nothing but a little dust."*

GEORGE MOORE  
1852-1933



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## The Asylum

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## President's Message

by Pete Smith

Each year NBS members have an opportunity to meet at the ANA convention, and we will meet again this year in New York City. Your NBS board is making plans for the event, and hope that many members can make plans to join us.

The Numismatic Bibliomania Society will be hosting a literature symposium at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 1. The meeting is scheduled for the Ziegfield Room on the fourth floor of the Marriott Marquis Hotel.

In past years, we had speakers or a panel discussion at the sym-

posium. We are looking for suggestions for the program. If you would like to make a presentation at the symposium, contact any board member with your suggestion.

Our general membership meeting is scheduled for the following day, August 2, at 11:30 a.m. This meeting will also be in the Ziegfield Room.

In past years, we have conducted an auction of donated items during our general meeting. If you wish to make a donation, please contact any board member.

## New Members

Rudy Bahr, Colorado Springs, CO.  
Bryce Brown, Avon, CT  
Chris Connell, Colorado Springs, CO  
David Crenshaw, Lawrenceville, GA  
Barbara Gregory, Colorado Springs, CO

Robert Knepper, Anaheim, CA  
Lucien R. Philppon, Southboro, MA  
David Sundman, Littleton, NH  
Ronald Swerdloff, Long Beach, CA  
John Dembinski, Wayne, MI  
Len Harsel, Springfield, VA  
Ira Rezak, Stony Brook, NY



## My Amazing Story by a 1795 B-10 Dollar As told to W. David Perkins

I am a fine 1795 Bolender-10 silver dollar. I have quite a tale to tell.

My story begins in the 1st half of the 20th century. My earliest recollections are that I am in the care of the Gutttag Brothers, somewhere in New York. Sometime prior to 1950 (my memory is foggy), I am acquired by a Mr. Milferd H. Bolender who gives me a new home in Freeport, Illinois.<sup>1</sup> I believe that Julius Gutttag and Mr. Bolender were good friends as Mr. Gutttag proposed Mr. Bolender for membership in the American Numismatic Association in January 1925.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Bolender loved me and studied me in great detail. He always said I was a very rare specimen and that there weren't many like me. Mr. Bolender eventually adopted 183 or so of us. We were all similar, but different in our own little ways, even those the same age. In the late 1940s Mr. Bolender photographed some of us. I feel very lucky to have been chosen. He wrote a book about us and published it, along with my photo in

July 1950. My photo is still there after 50 years.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Bolender took us many places so others could see us and get to know us. I went to conventions with Mr. Bolender in Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Washington, Milwaukee and various other cities. What fun we had. People loved seeing us wherever we went and were most appreciative that we were there.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Bolender shared my photo with those who collected us when they bought his book. In addition, I was so special he mailed my photograph so others could admire and study my details. And maybe find another like me, although I doubt it – I'm pretty special. I can't remember to whom he mailed the photos, but one person was a nice doctor in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, who liked me (and the others like me). This doctor kept my picture for many years. Eventually he gave my photo away along with some books. I heard the photo ended up with a gentleman named Armand Champa somewhere in Kentucky. He kept

<sup>1</sup> See 183rd Sale M.H. Bolender, February 23, 1952, lot 12. Pedigree information from sale catalog lot description.

<sup>2</sup> "M.H. Bolender dies; early dollar scholar," *Coin World*, November 30, 1977.

<sup>3</sup> M.H. Bolender, *The United States Early Silver Dollars from 1794 to 1803* (Freeport, 1950), pl. II.

<sup>4</sup> "Introduction," 183rd Sale M.H. Bolender, February 23, 1952, p.4.

this photograph of me until a couple of years ago when Mr. Champa mailed it to New Hampshire for a short time. The photo then went to Baltimore for a week or so, then back to New Hampshire for another week and then off to Littleton, Colorado where it is now reunited with me.<sup>5</sup> But I digress.

Saturday, February 23, 1952, I remember sadly. Mr. Bolender sold me (can you believe it) and the other 182 of us. For the most part we were to be separated widely for the remainder of our lives. I was slightly more fortunate as I was kept "intact" with all of us the same age. We were acquired as a group in Bolender's 183rd Sale and were mailed to our new home in Salisbury, Maryland.<sup>6</sup> A nice gentleman named K. P. Austin immediately took up where Mr. Bolender left off. Mr. Austin also loved and studied us.

Mr. Bolender sent photos of most of us "95s", myself included, to Mr. Austin. This photo stayed around long after I was

gone. Interestingly, this photo too was eventually sent to Littleton, Colorado (by Mr. Austin).<sup>7</sup> But I digress again.

Mr. Austin gave us all a good home for years. Sometime around 1961, he can't remember nor can I, Mr. Austin sold us (here we go again, what a life!) either to Mr. Bolender for a short time or directly to a Mr. A. J. Ostheimer and his wife. Neither I, nor Mr. Austin can remember exactly how it came about. Although Mr. and Mrs. Ostheimer loved us and gave us a good home I know we were missed greatly by Mr. Austin.<sup>8</sup> The Ostheimers kept us in Philadelphia and Hawaii. I'm not sure but once or twice they may have taken us to a home they kept in Santa Fe, New Mexico.<sup>9</sup>

We were lucky again (to be loved and to have a good home). And life was pretty good. I now had year round tan as a result of my travels and living in Hawaii. My tan is slightly on the dark side, but I'm told I look pretty darn good today. Everything was

<sup>5</sup> Armand Champa Library Sale, Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc., September 10, 1995, lot 2093. Photo originally sent to Dr. Joseph Presley by M.H. Bolender. Correspondence and phone interview with Dr. Presley, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> M.H. Bolender Sale, February 23, 1952, lots 3-19. K.P. Austin copy of sale catalogue, with invoice and correspondence from M. H. Bolender. Catalogue acquired at the Armand Champa Library sale, Auctions by Bowers and Merena, Inc., November 28, 1995, lot 3160.

<sup>7</sup> September 12, 1996, letter to the author from K. P. Austin, with photos of 1795 dollars from Bolender collection enclosed. The note partially stated "Enclosed the copy of photos which came from Bol. when I bought the set."

<sup>8</sup> Phone interview with K.P. Austin, September 12, 1996. Mr. Austin recalls selling his early dollar collection to Bolender, Bolender then selling the complete collection to A. J. Ostheimer by private sale.

<sup>9</sup> Author's research. A. J. Ostheimer and his wife had a home in Santa Fe, New Mexico, per Art Rubino, Numismatic Arts of Santa Fe, Fine Numismatic Books.



going well in Hawaii until one night in June 1968. About half of us, including me and 112 others that lived with the Ostheimers, were kidnapped – stolen from the Ostheimer's home while they were out!<sup>10</sup> We were enclosed all together and were roughly handled, bumping into each other frequently.<sup>11</sup> None of us were conscious so we don't remember the details. Were we dumped into the ocean at one point?<sup>12</sup> Thankfully, Mr. Ostheimer negotiated our return and we were on our way home.

But when we got home we learned that the Ostheimers had been upset over this whole ordeal and had shipped a bunch of us that were not kidnapped to a Mr. Lester Merkin in New York City to be sold.<sup>13</sup> And sure enough, despite some possible regrets by Mr. and Mrs. Ostheimer, over 100 of us were sold to the highest bidder on Wednesday evening, September 18, 1968 at the Drake Hotel, Park Avenue and 56th Street, New York City. Those of us who had been kidnapped, and not sold in this 1968 sale, were now back home locked up safely (finally). We led a more dark and lonely existence for a few years. And

then it happened to the rest of us. We were sold to a Mr. Goldberg of Superior Rare Coin Galleries in Beverly Hills, California and were shipped to him and our new home shortly after. He sold some of us to a Mr. Edwards Huntington Metcalf but that did not last long.<sup>14</sup> I don't want to talk about where I was until 1975.

In August 1970 I was interviewed by *Coin World* newspaper. They wrote about me and published my full picture in their August 5, 1970, edition. They called me "extremely rare" and the only one known to Mr. Ostheimer. They also mentioned two old friends of mine, Mr. M.H. Bolender and Mr. K.P. Austin. But the rough times continued – many of my friends were bought and sold in 1973 and 1974 (and I know I said I didn't want to talk about it!). Then in 1975, we learned that it was going to happen again to all of us. However, despite knowing I was to be sold on Wednesday evening, August 20, 1975, the weeks prior to being sold were fun.<sup>15</sup> A large number of prominent numismatists viewed and studied me closely. I remember a gent with a long beard and a

<sup>10</sup> "Burglars steal rare coins from Ostheimer," *Coin World*, July 3, 1968, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> "Ostheimer pays ransom for return of coins," *Coin World*, September 25, 1968, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> "Ostheimer corrects error concerning missing proof," *Coin World*, October 23, 1968, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Phone interview with Jules Reiver, 1999.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Larry Goldberg at Ira and Larry Goldberg Rare Coins, Beverly Hills, California, August 12, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Superior Stamp and Coin Co., Inc. ANA Auction Sale, August 19-23, 1975.

funny shirt on – I think his name was Breen. I noted that he wrote in his catalog by my description “R-7+, Probably 2nd or 3rd” [finest known] and underlined “Reverse illustrated in Bolender book.” He and another gentleman, a Mr. Jack Collins, must have been friends as Mr. Collins upon seeing me wrote in his catalog “high R-7 and 1 of 3 finest, probably second finest.” They both made me feel special – I guess you could say that “I still had it” after all those years!<sup>16</sup> I also remember being carefully handled by a nice man named Jules Reiver.<sup>17</sup> And so many others I don’t remember....

Somehow I was acquired by a Mr. H. Roland Willasch who, like the majority before him, loved and studied me. I know him acquiring me in an auction sale was unusual. I believe he liked to find those like me on something

called “the bourse.”

I remained with Mr. Willasch until May 27, 1990, when my new owner, a David Perkins in Littleton, acquired me in Colorado.<sup>18</sup> He, like the majority before him, loves and studies me. He writes letters to my former owners. He buys auction catalogues that were owned by my former owners and others who had made notes while viewing me. He acquired miscellaneous items pertaining to me and to the former owners. He has pictures of me from all over. He even found a photograph of me a book by in a Robert P. Hilt called *Die Varieties of Early United States Coins*.<sup>19</sup> I’m not even sure how my picture got in this book. But I do know my latest owner loves me, keeps me in a safe place and comes to visit with me often. Most importantly he promised to keep me for a long time. Until next time...

<sup>16</sup> A.N.A. Auction Sale, Superior Stamp and Coin Co., Inc. August 19-23, 1975, Walter Breen copy and Jack Collins copy (ex. Kolbe 5/94), owned by author.

<sup>17</sup> Phone interview with Jules Reiver, 1996. Jules Reiver attended Superior Stamp and Coin’s ANA Auction Sale and lot viewing in person, August, 1975.

<sup>18</sup> The Father Flannagan’s Boys Home Sale, Superior Galleries. May 27-29, 1990, lot 448.

<sup>19</sup> R.P. Hilt II, *Die Varieties of Early United States Coins* (Omaha, 1980), pp 64-65 (plates).



## Development of the Coin Album Part 6

by David W. Lange

"Imitation is the most sincere form of plagiarism."

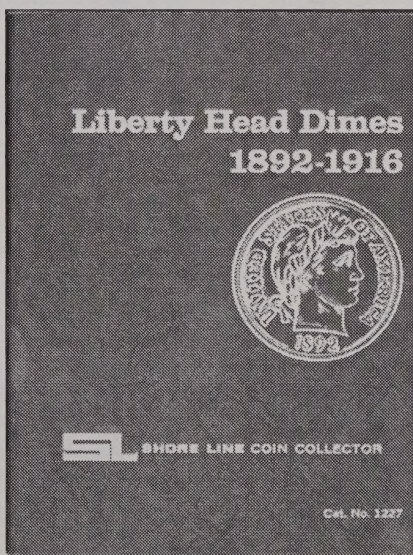
I wish I'd said that. Well, whoever did say it may have been referring to coin folders – at least, I'd like to think so.

The immense success of Whitman's blue folders for collecting coins led to most rival manufacturers adopting the same format and dimensions. The most obvious exceptions were those manufacturers whose folders preceded those of Whitman, namely Oberwise and Dansco. I'll have more to say about these makers in later installments of this series. For the present, let's look at just one line of folders that were near clones of the Whitman product right down to the color scheme used.

The early 1960s witnessed the peak of coin collecting's mass popularity. Not surprisingly, this period produced the greatest outpouring of coin folders and albums, though the recent mania over statehood quarters has already rivaled it in the sheer number of brands to be found. One maker of coin folders during the peak years of 1963-64 was Shore Line Printing, of Lester, Pennsylvania. Its line of folders was issued under the banner of Shore Line Coin Collector, and more than fifty titles were offered. The shoreline of this brand's name was that of the

Delaware River, as Lester is just south of Philadelphia.

These folders were of the same basic dimensions as the Whitman folders and used the same layout and color scheme of silver printing on navy blue covers. Inside, royal blue boards replaced the insignia blue typical of Whitman folders, and their silver lettering was a little more stylish than Whitman's black. Shore Line's graphics were slightly different, and the backing paper of each folder was coated with a tarnish-resistant "poly-ethelene" [sic] film. While a worthwhile nod toward preservation, it's doubtful that this feature was truly effective, since the edges of the holes were not coated, and the coins could simply



tarnish from their edges inward.

It's likely that this brand was a regional one, distributed primarily within the eastern states. I say this not only because the folders were printed there but also because I rarely encountered them when I lived in California. They are far more prevalent among dealers' stocks of used folders now that I live in New Jersey and do my album hunting here. Well made, the Shore Line folders have held up better than most competing brands, and the more basic titles may be found in collectable condition.

As with most manufacturers of coin folders and albums active during the early 1960s, Shore Printing did a cut and run when the popularity of collecting coins from circulation fizzled at the end of 1964. A search on the Internet failed to turn up a Shore Printing in Lester or in any other city, and the company probably no longer exists.

I've never seen any advertisements for Shore Line folders in contemporary numismatic publications, so their target market was clearly the general public caught up in the coin mania of

that time. Collections assembled during those years are still being brought into coin shops today. Used Shore Line folders are occasionally offered within the piles of Whitman folders found in shops and at shows, and they make nice collectibles. The sellers typically don't even notice that they're not Whitman folders, and prices of 50 cents to a dollar are common.

I doubt that all of the titles listed on the endflap of each folder were actually produced. I've encountered only a small percentage of the total roster given, and these same few titles keep reappearing. If the remaining titles were indeed produced and distributed, they may be considered rarities today.

As will be noted from the listing below, there are a few variants of the same basic titles. For example, Shore Line corrected itself when someone noticed that "Buffalo Head Nickels" was a misnomer, and the revised version reads "Buffalo Nickels." The folders I actually own and whose exact titles have thus been confirmed are indicated by a plus (+) sign.

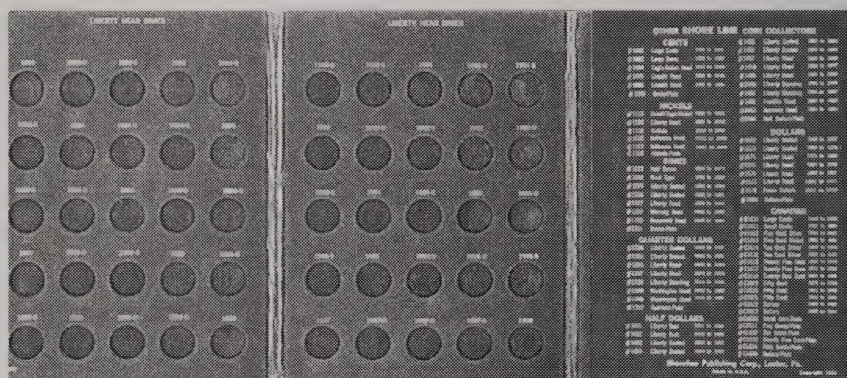
Number	Title
1002. . . . .	Large Cents 1793-1821
1003. . . . .	Large Cents 1822-1857
1004 .. + ..	Eagle-Indian Head Cents 1857-1909
1005 .. + ..	Lincoln Head Cents 1909-1940
1006 .. + ..	Lincoln Head Cents 1941-Present
1008. . . . .	Cents-Plain
1113. . . . .	Shield Type Nickels 1866-1883
1114 .. + ..	Liberty Head Nickels 1883-1912
1115 .. + ..	Buffalo Head Nickels 1913-1938
1115 .. + ..	Buffalo Nickels 1913-1938
1116 .. + ..	Jefferson Head Nickels 1938-Present



Number	Title
1116 ..+...	Jefferson Head Nickels 1938-1963
1118.....	Nickels-Plain
1223.....	Half Dimes 1829-1873
1224 ..+...	Bust Type Dimes 1798-1837
1225.....	Liberty Seated Dimes 1838-1868
1226.....	Liberty Seated Dimes 1869-1891
1227 ..+...	Liberty Head Dimes 1892-1916
1228 ..+...	Mercury Head Dimes 1916-1945
1229.....	Roosevelt Head Dimes 1946-Present
1231.....	Dimes-Plain
1334.....	Liberty Seated Quarter Dollars 1838-1867
1335.....	Liberty Seated Quarter Dollars 1868-1891
1336.....	Liberty Head Quarter Dollars 1892-1903
1337.....	Liberty Head Quarter Dollars 1904-1916
1338 ..+...	Liberty Standing Quarter Dollars 1916-1930
1339 ..+...	Washington Head Quarter Dollars 1932-1950
1340 ..+...	Washington Head Quarter Dollars 1951-Present
1342 ..+...	Quarters-Plain
1451.....	Liberty Bust Half Dollars 1801-1819
1452.....	Liberty Bust Half Dollars 1820-1839
1453.....	Liberty Seated Half Dollars 1839-1852
1454.....	Liberty Seated Half Dollars 1853-1863
1455.....	Liberty Seated Half Dollars 1864-1874
1456 ..+...	Liberty Seated Half Dollars 1875-1891
1457.....	Liberty Head Half Dollars 1892-1899
1458 ..+...	Liberty Head Half Dollars 1900-1907
1459.....	Liberty Head Half Dollars 1907-1915
1460 ..+...	Liberty Standing Half Dollars 1916-1935
1461 ..+...	Liberty Standing Half Dollars 1936-1947
1462 ..+...	Franklin Head Half Dollars 1948 to 1963
1463.....	Kennedy Head Half Dollars 1964-Present
1464 ..+...	Half Dollars-Plain
1572.....	Liberty Seated Dollars 1840-1857
1573.....	Liberty Seated Dollars 1859-1873
1574.....	Liberty Head Dollars 1878-1883
1575.....	Liberty Head Dollars 1884-1889
1576.....	Liberty Head Dollars 1890-1897
1577.....	Liberty Head Dollars 1898-1922
1578.....	Liberty Head Dollars 1923-1935
1580.....	Dollars-Plain
C-1610.....	Canadian Large Cents 1858-1920
C-1611.....	Canadian Small Cents 1920-Present
C-1612.....	Canadian Five Cent Silver 1858-1921
C-1613.....	Canadian Five Cent Nickel 1922-Present
C-1614.....	Canadian Ten Cent Silver 1858-1910
C-1615 ..+...	Canadian Ten Cent Silver 1911 to date

**Number Title**

- C-1616. . . . . Canadian Twenty Five Cents 1858-1910  
 C-1617. . . . . Canadian Twenty Five Cents 1911-1952  
 C-1618. . . . . Canadian Twenty Five Cents 1953-Present  
 C-1619. . . . . Canadian Fifty Cents 1870-1910  
 C-1620. . . . . Canadian Fifty Cents 1911-1945  
 C-1621. . . . . Canadian Fifty Cents 1946-Present  
 C-1622. . . . . Canadian Dollars 1935-1952  
 C-1623. . . . . Canadian Dollars 1953-Present  
 C-1630. . . . . Canadian Small Cents-Plain  
 C-1631. . . . . Canadian Five Cents-Plain  
 C-1632. . . . . Canadian Ten Cents-Plain  
 C-1633. . . . . Canadian Twenty Five Cents-Plain  
 C-1634. . . . . Canadian Fifty Cents-Plain  
 C-1635. . . . . Canadian Dollars-Plain





## Numismatics in the Age of Grolier

by George F. Kolbe

On October 27, 2001, a symposium co-sponsored by the American Numismatic Society was held in conjunction with the Grolier Club exhibition entitled "Numismatics in the Age of Grolier." While the title is not inaccurate, it perhaps fails to capture the main focus of the exhibition and the symposium: the early printed numismatic record. Simply put, the Grolier Club exhibition is the most important exhibition of 16th century numismatic books ever presented in this country; perhaps it is the most notable ever to take place anywhere.

In the broader sense, the title is quite appropriate – the exhibition skillfully integrates actual coins and medals described and often depicted in many of the books on display. Furthermore, it emphasizes the important if lesser-known role of the "Prince of Bibliophiles" Jean Grolier (for whom the club is named) as an important coin collector. Jean Grolier de Servin, vicomte d'Aquisy (1489/90-1565), is famous today largely for his love of books, exemplified by the wonderful bindings in which he clothed them and by the famous motto adorning their covers: *Jo. Grolierii et amicorum*, i.e., Jean Grolier and his friends. Two of his celebrated bindings, on numismatic works published in 1526 (Huttich) and 1548 (Vico), were on view, courtesy of the

Bibliotheca Wittrockiana in Brussels and the collection of Otto Schäfer in Schweinfurt.

The October 27 symposium featured an outstanding roster of speakers, including moderator Henri Zerner, Harvard University Professor of History of Art and Architecture; Professor John Cunnally, author of *Images of the Illustrious, the Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance*; Jean-Baptiste Giard, Conservateur émérité of the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris; Dr. Stephen K. Scher, editor of *The Currency of Fame, Portrait Medals of the Renaissance*; and Dr. C.E. Dekesel, author of *Bibliotheca Nummaria*, the new standard bibliography of sixteenth century numismatic books.

The symposium took place in the commodious Grolier Club exhibition hall, where some thirty-five attendees were surrounded on three sides by a panoply of superb numismatic books, coins, and medals. Approximately one hundred 16th century works on numismatics were accompanied by a similar number of coins and medals, along with engraved portraits of numismatic authors, and beautiful leather coin trays of the period. Gracing the walls were a monumental framed display of 161 engraved portraits of Roman emperors, and an oil painting of the Abbé de Rothelin, who acquired much of

Grolier's coin collection (perhaps housed at the time in a coin cabinet found in the background of this evocative painting).

In his introduction of John Cunnally, the first speaker, Professor Zerner commented upon a prevailing ignorance of numismatics by art historians. In recent years, Professor Cunnally in *Images of the Illustrious, the Numismatic Presence in the Renaissance* (Princeton University Press, 1999), and Francis Haskell in *History and Its Images, Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (Yale University Press, 1993) have done much to address this stunning under-appreciation of numismatics as an unparalleled source of accurate ancient images and historical information.

Professor Cunnally enlarged on this topic, noting that art historians have long relied on ancient texts, and, when actual images were required, usually relied on sculpture as their main source. Sculptures, he said, are generally fragmentary, while coins are intact, and the latter combine images with inscriptions, thus providing accurate means of identification. Coins, he claimed, also facilitate various arrangements, including chronology and other topics. Professor Cunnally's presentation was a highlight of the symposium. It was followed by a paper by Jean Baptiste Giard, recently retired, who is writing a new book on the role of numismatics in the Renaissance. His presentation touched on many topics of interest to those assembled.

Dr. Stephen Scher, a renowned expert on Renaissance medals, gave an interesting and informative exposition on that topic, well illustrated with color slides and a case of rather spectacular medals on display in the room. Grolier Club member Jonathan Kagan, co-curator of the exhibition and a noted numismatist and bibliophile, presented key portions of Dr. Christian Dekesel's presentation on Hubert Goltzcius. Dr. Dekesel was unable to attend due to the events of September 11. His credentials on the topic are impeccable, having written in 1988 a groundbreaking annotated and illustrated bibliography, *Hubert Goltzcius: The Father of Ancient Numismatics*. Especially interesting were previously unknown details of the ingenious, complex and novel methods utilized in the multicolored tinting of the title pages and oversize ancient Roman coin images found in the author's *Vivae imagines*. Published in five languages and in many varieties, the 1557 Italian and 1561 French editions were on view.

In sum, being able to see a hundred numismatic incunables with a sweep of the eye, combined with wonderful examples of the coins and medals depicted and discussed in them, complemented by the exhibition catalogue and, particularly, by the spoken views of a remarkable assemblage of scholars on the topic, was an event never to be forgotten; one to be treasured by those privileged to attend.

While the text is not illustrat-



ed, the exhibition catalogue is a must read for anyone interested in early numismatic books. Depicted on the covers are two illustrations derived from one of the highlights of the exhibition, a magnificent mid-16th century manuscript volume of drawings by Enea Vico, comprising single images of ancient Roman emperors within delightfully historiated borders. The nicely produced 75 page catalogue, priced at \$15, must be purchased at the Grolier Club; mail and phone orders are not accepted.\*

On a personal note, during the October 25 ride from the airport to New York City, I was startled to note the name of my taxi dri-

ver, Hossain Mohammed. To my query, he replied that he was from Bangladesh and that he had been here for fifteen years, adding matter-of-factly with a hint of pride: "I am a New Yorker." The city itself reflected a renewed appreciation of our country. U.S. flags were to be seen everywhere, and most everyone seemed to be friendly and considerate. Perhaps the rebirth in the arts beginning seven centuries ago, exemplified by the wonderful objects on display at the Grolier, will have parallels in a renaissance of the American spirit and a deeper appreciation of the responsibilities of freedom.

**\*Editors Note:** Since we received the text of Mr. Kolbe's article in November 2001, the following notice appeared in the *The E-Sylum* 5/7, February 10, 2002:

*Numismatics in the Age of Grolier Still Available*

Stephen Pradier writes to note that the *Numismatics in the Age of Grolier* book is now available from a distributor of the publications of The Grolier Club.

The Veatchs Arts of the Book sells the exhibit catalog for \$15 plus \$4 for shipping payable by check or credit card. Their web address is <http://www.veatchs.com> Sounds like the distributor is more egalitarian than the publisher in making the book available to the public.

In addition to the distributor, copies of this book are also available from Spink & Son in London. Their contact information may be found in their ad elsewhere in this issue.

## A Selection of Desirable 19th Century Auction Sales Containing Important Canadian Numismatic Material

by Darryl A. Atchison

Recently while reading an old issue of *Out On A Limb* published by Ken Lowe and Myron Xenos of The Money Tree, I came across a grouping of articles concerning the collectability of 19th century American auction catalogues.<sup>1</sup> Reading this article I was struck by the knowledge and obvious passion each of the authors expressed for this once obscure collecting speciality.

Among the ideas presented were several concerning different collecting methodology, including one suggestion on forming a small collection containing just one catalogue by each of the individuals listed in John W. Adams, *United States Numismatic Literature*, volume 1: *19th Century Auction Catalogs*. This struck an immediate chord with me and I began considering what just such a collection might contain.

Taking into account my own personal preferences, I have listed below the catalogues that would be included in my own library based solely upon the criteria that each sale had to be among the pre-eminent sales in each series for Canadian numismatic material specifically. In cases, where there was no clear winner I have indicated second choices and in some cases I have explained my rationale for selecting a catalogue which at first glance would probably not be the obvious selection.

Rather than list the sales in the order by the firms as they were presented by John in his masterful publication, I have instead chosen to list the sales chronologically. I have also included a rough estimate in U.S. dollars on how much a copy of the catalogue may cost based upon fixed

<sup>1</sup> J. Rock, "Why collect classic American auction catalogues," *Out on a Limb* 8/1 (1994), 2-3; *Idem.*, "The auction addict: How and why collectors pursue classic auction sales," *Out on a Limb* 8/1 (1994), 3-6; M. Borckardt, "Some observations on numismatic auction catalogues," *Out on a Limb* 8/1 (1994), p.6; W.K. Homren, "Auction catalogues as a research tool," *Out on a Limb* 8/1 (1994), pp.6-7; R. Bourne, "Collecting 19th century numismatic auction catalogues," *Out on a Limb* 8/1 (1994), 7-8; K. Lowe, "You really should collect numismatic auction catalogues," *Out on a Limb* 8/1 (1994), pp.8-10. See also, K. Lowe, "The ten most significant American numismatic auction sales," *Out on a Limb* 2/2 (1988), pp.4-6.

The following abbreviations are used: Adams = J.W. Adams, *United States Numismatic Literature*, vol. 1: *Nineteenth Century Auction Catalogs* (Mission Viejo, 1982); Davis = C. Davis, *American Numismatic Literature: An Annotated Survey of Auction Sales 1980-1991* (Lincoln, MA, 1992).



price lists and auction results.

1. Bangs, Merwin & Co. *Catalogue of a collection of Roman and English silver and copper coins and tokens, and select silver and bronze medals, comprising the cabinet of James Oliver*. New York: June 3-5, 1868, 88 pp., 1456 lots, unprinted.

Rare Canadian, side-view half-penny. Adams (no. 12) rated overall B, Canadian C+. One of the weakest sales in this listing, the only other two Bangs, Merwin sales of Canadian consequence are already included elsewhere in this listing under other cataloguers and this one had to be added. (Est. \$50)

2. Mason, Ebenezer Locke. *"Fewsmith cabinet:" A collection of interesting and valuable silver and copper coins, medals, etc., embracing a fine assortment of foreign and U.S. pieces, also, a choice line of colonials, Washingtons, pattern pieces, politicals, store cards, tokens, in various metals, formerly the property of Wm. Fewsmith, A.M., Philadelphia, purchased and offered at public sale by Mason & Co., coin dealers*. New York: Leavitt, Strebeigh & Co., October 4-7, 1870, 102 pp., 2501 lots, unprinted, small format.

Adams (no. 13) rated overall A, Canadian C; Davis no. 661. Speaking strictly in terms of Canadian material only, this catalogue is the best of a bad lot since the Mason series does not really contain any catalogues of Canadian importance. However, Adams states that auctioning the "Fewsmith cabinet" was the highlight of Mason's numismat-

ic career and as such represents an important piece in the collection despite being weak in Canadian material (Est. \$125)

3. Strobridge, William Harvey. *Catalogue of a valuable collection of American coins and medals, the property of Charles Clay, M.D., of Manchester, England*. New York: George A. Leavitt & Co., December 5-7, 1871, 97 pp., 1356 lots, 2 pl.

Usually attributed exclusively to Strobridge, it should be pointed out that Adams states that William Elliot Woodward played a very strong role in the production of this sale, which includes coins, tokens and medals including the Upper Canada Preserved medal. Lot 44 was supposed to be two examples of Magdalen Island halfpence tokens, despite the fact the neither contemporary nor modern collectors have confirmed this token's existence.

However, engraver/medallist Sir Edward Thomason recalls in his *Memoirs During Half a Century*, published in 1845, that both halfpence and one pence tokens were issued for Magdalen Island by Sir Isaac Coffin.

Adams (no. 9) rated overall A+. Note that Adams attributes a great deal of the work associated with this particular catalogue to W. Elliott Woodward – although none of the sales in the Strobridge series are rated by Adams for anything important in the Canadian series, the above notes would certainly indicate that this sale is indeed quite significant (Est. \$175)

4. Cogan, Edward. *Catalogue of*

a collection of coins and medals, embracing an assortment of the rarest and finest Canadian pieces ever yet offered at public auction, also, an exceedingly interesting and valuable assortment of silver pennies of Edward the Confessor, all different, and some remarkably beautiful French medals, &c. New York: Bangs, Merwin & Co., Auctioneers, June 29-30, 1876. 52 pp., 960 lots, unprinted.

Very rare Canadian material including a Beaver Club medal in gold, Indian Chief peace medals and the first auction appearance of the North West Company token. Adams (no. 47) rated overall B+, Canadian A. This was a difficult choice to make, although the overall Canadian content is of a higher standard, the catalogue of the 'Montreal collection' sold in April 3-5, 1871, is perhaps just as desirable a catalogue due to the fact that Sandham catalogued the material as well as the fact that the 1871 catalogue contains a photographic plate while the sale above is unprinted (Est. \$45)

5. Haseltine, John W. *Centennial coin and curiosity sale*, part V: *Collected by E.M. Sellon, F.N. Beebe and S.L. Appleton and others*. Philadelphia: Thomas Birch & Sons, September 6-8, 1876. 62 pp., 1373 lots, unprinted.

Contains such items as a side-view halfpenny, four rare 1750s medals with anti-French and anti-British political themes and a 1851 YMCA medal. Adams (no. 24) rated overall B, Canadian C. Once again this was a difficult choice since there was no outstanding Canadian sale in the

series, and the sale of the Charles Besson collection on Dec. 16-17, 1880, could just as easily have been selected since it too contained several significant Canadian rarities. However, the unusualness of the material in the above sale led to its being selected (Est. \$30).

6. Proskey, David U. No sale selected as the five sales he conducted (September 1876 – March 1887) prior to joining New York Coin & Stamp in 1888 did not contain any significant Canadian material whatsoever. Sadly, my collection would have a permanently unfillable gap (Est. N/A).

7. Harzfeld, Sigismund K. *Catalogue of coins and medals comprising Greek and Roman coins, etc., from the renowned collection of Dr. Grotevend, Hanover, Germany; U.S. and foreign coins, centennial and Masonic medals*. New York: Bangs & Co., Auctioneers, October 25-26, 1877. 51 pp., 1000 lots, 2 line-art pl.

Among the items one will find herein are a Gloriam Regni 5 sols and rare Canadian tokens. Adams (no. 1) rated overall B, Canadian C. It was literally a toss of the coin to decide which sale to include from the Harzfeld series, since the sale conducted on March 13-15, 1878, contained equally important Canadian material as well as strong Indian Chief peace medals; however the absence of plates caused it to remain second choice (Est. \$25).

8. Woodward, William Elliot. *Catalogue of the collection of coins*



and medals, formed by Henry W. Holland, Esq. of Boston, together with the Chadbourne collection of store cards, and a great variety of American and foreign coins, medals, numismatic works, autographs, paper currency, etc., etc. New York: Bangs & Co., Auctioneers, November 11-16, 1878. 242 pp., 4208 lots, unprinted.

British colonial coins and medals, rare Canadian by Sandham number's, including a Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Success halfpenny. Adams (no. 19) rated overall A, Canadian A. Clearly the hands down winner of the series, with no significant rivals of which to speak (Est. \$175).

9. Anthon, Charles; Feuardent, Gaston L. and Cogan, George. *Catalogue of Professor Anthon's numismatic cabinet: part I: Comprising coins and medals of the British Empire...* New York: Bangs & Co., Auctioneers, November. 17-18, 1879. 61 pp., 950 lots, unprinted.

British war medals, coronation medals, White's farthing and Sandham 7, 8 and 78 (un sou, a rare impression in copper struck from old dies on a U.S. cent), Adams (Bangs no. 17) rated overall B, Canadian B, Davis no. 50. I have included this sale sort of as a cheater since it is technically not listed by Adams in the George Cogan series. However, Cogan played a significant role in the sale of part I of the Anthon cabinet, and the only other choice would have been part V of the Anthon cabinet sold on Oct. 20, 1884, which is grossly inferior to the sale I have

selected (Est. \$50).

10. Smith, Harlan Page. *Numismatic collections of Alfred Sandham and George Cushing, of Montreal, Canada.* New York: Bangs & Co., Auctioneers, January 18-19, 1884. 53 pp., 916 lots, 2 pl.

A very important collection of Canadian medals, eight medals by the Wyons, copper coins and tokens, Lesslie two pence, bank notes, Maritimes, medical, war and other medals formed by one of Canada's great early numismatists. Adams (no. 13) rated overall B-, Canadian B, Davis no. 942. Although the Canadian material in this sale is slightly inferior to that contained in the Douglas Stewart cabinet sold from June 4-5, 1885, I believe the Sandham provenience makes this a slightly more desirable catalogue (Est. \$200)

11. Massamore, George. *23rd Sale: Catalogue of a varifed and interesting collection of coins, medals, stamps, fractional currency, Confederate money.* New York: Bangs & Co., Auctioneers, February 11, 1884. 21 pp., 533 lots, unprinted.

Adams (no. 23) rated overall C+, Canadian C. To be honest, this is the only sale listed by Adams with any significant Canadian material whatsoever in the Massamore series and is only selected for this collection by default, since it is truly in a different league than the majority of the other catalogues selected (Est. \$20).

12. New York Coin & Stamp Company [Harlan Page Smith

and David U. Proskey]. *Catalogue of the remarkably fine collection of U.S. patterns and experimental coins formed by Mr. Geo. D. Woodside, Philadelphia, Pa., together with the Canadian coins and medals of the late Mr. James Oliver, of New York*. New York: Bangs & Co., Auctioneers, April 23, 1892. 45 pp., 596 lots, 4 pl.

Containing 404 lots of superb Canadian patterns and medals, a side-view penny and other tokens. Adams (no. 6) rated overall A-, Canadian B+, Davis no. 785. Undoubtedly the strongest sale in terms of Canadian material, although the Richard collection sold June 30, 1899, is a close second (Est. \$75).

13. Frossard, Édouard. *Catalogue of the Joseph Hooper collection of U.S. coins and medals, Franco-American and Canadian medals and tokens, English, foreign and Oriental coins in silver and copper, English war medals, Australian tokens...* New York: George A. Leavitt & Co., July 21-22, 1892. 44 pp., 863 lots, un-plated.

A major Canadian sale, containing Indian Chief peace medals and rare tokens. Adams (no. 112) rated overall B+, Canadian A. This was one of the most difficult decisions in the entire group to make, foregoing the sale of the Gerald Hart collection (December 26-28, 1888) which admittedly contained more significant Canadian material, I choose instead to select the cabinet of a Canadian collector who is very often overlooked by modern numismatists. Hooper's role in the formation of the ANA

caused me to select this collection above that of Hart (Est. \$25).

14. Scott Stamp & Coin Company. *Catalogue of the very valuable collection of Canadian coins, medals, and tokens formed by Gerald E. Hart, Esq., of Montreal, including many of the well known rarities and generally in the choicest condition [...] 132nd sale*. New York: Henry C. Merry, Auctioneer, April 13, 1895. 41 pp., 619 lots, 2 pl. of Canadian tokens and medals.

Catalogued by Lyman Low, the catalogue contains a discourse on the French Mint, superb Canadian jetons, a P.E.I. "hole-dollar," "sheaf-of-wheat" and other scarce P.E.I. tokens, a side-view halfpenny, a "Jamaica-on-cask" sloop token, as well as medals. Adams (no. 39) rated overall A, Canadian A. There is no competition in this series as the Canadian content is this sale far surpasses that in any of the other sales catalogued by this firm (Est. \$200).

15. Chapman, Samuel H; Henry Chapman. *Catalogue of the collection of Greek, Roman, and English coins, and of war medals and decorations, the property of a former officer in the army, and the collection of coins of the United States and Canada, of Mr. E.J.M. Chaloner, of England*. Philadelphia: Davis & Harvey, Auctioneers, April 29-30, 1895. 51, (1) pp., 883 lots, 5 pl.

Small format catalogue, rich in Canadian tokens featuring an extensive range of Bank of Montreal tokens, Breton 999



(three varieties) and Breton 1000 (unique). Adams (no.45) rated overall A, Canadian A. The selection of this catalogue from the Chapman brothers series presented some difficulty, since there are several other sales which also contain very significant Canadian material, most notably the Fred Bourquin and J.C. Johnston sales of December 13, 1897, which contained four North West Company tokens and five side-view bank tokens, and the sale of the P.O. Tremblay collection on December 22, 1899, but I believe the quality of the pieces in the Chaloner cabinet is just slightly more significant (Est. \$35).

16. Steigerwalt, Charles. *Catalogue of a collection of coins, notes, medals, etc., formed by Grant Weaver*. Lancaster, PA.: June 25, 1895. 21 pp., 546 lots.

The large format catalogue contains a Gloriam Regni 1670 Louis XIV half crown, Vexator Canadensis, Lesslie two pence, 1758 Nova Scotia medal, Indian Chief peace medal, 1876 Dominion medal, war and various medals. Adams (no. 43) rated overall C+, Canadian C. This was once again a very difficult selection to make since there was no clear champion in the series and in the end my personal collecting preferences caused me to select this sale over others which were equally strong such as the William Appleton cabinet sold from May 21-22, 1907, which is unfortunately outside the 19th century or I may have chosen it instead (Est. \$25).

17. Low, Lyman Haynes. *Catalogue of the valuable and highly interesting collection of coins, medals and tokens, the property of Benjamin Betts, of Brooklyn, N.Y. consisting of early American medals, store cards of New York City, and others, embracing most of the rarest known; badges and decorations of the War with Mexico and War of the Rebellion, with medalets of Davis and Beauregard, together with a matchless line of Spanish-American proclamation pieces, from Philip V to Isabella II, including several unpublished, and an unrivalled Mexican array of the issues of Morelos, Augustin and Maximilian, with many pattern coins of the first republic*. New York: Henry C. Merry, Auctioneer, January 11-12, 1898. 108 pp., 1183 lots, 5 pl.

Betts' collection of American medals was unrivalled, and became the basis of his own published text on the subject and subsequent numbering system. The large format catalogue contains Breton 546-548 and important background information on the Bout de L'Isle series of tokens. Adams (no.37) rated overall A+. Although unrated by Adams for Canadian content I believe that the importance of the Betts series, which includes pieces equally significant to Canada as well as the United States as well as the presence of several significant Canadian rarities, makes this catalogue the undisputed selection from the Low series – but if I had to select a second choice, it would have to be the sale of February 4-5, 1885 which undoubtedly has the

strongest grouping of exclusively Canadian material (Est. \$300).

18. Chapman, Henry. *Catalogue of the collection of coins and medals of Charles Morris, Esq., Chicago, Ill., a Philadelphia gentleman and the late Richard L. Ashhurst, Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: Samuel T. Freeman & Co., June 30, 1911. (4), 54 pp., 710 lots, unprinted.

The small format catalogue includes extensive Canadian communion tokens, early Canadian and American medals including Indian Chief peace medals. Adams (no. 17) rated overall B+, Canadian A. Although technically outside of the 19th century, I have included two sales conducted privately by each of the Chapman brothers for continuity and this particular sale was a very difficult choice to make since I believe that Adams misevaluated several sales in the Henry Chapman series for their Canadian content. Unlike Samuel, Henry conducted a large number sales with important Canadian material, the most notable of which was the collection of Henry Parsons sold on June 24-27, 1914, which contained a hugely significant collection of Canadian material as well as having the added bonus of possessing 13 plates while the sale above has none – all in all the Parsons sale may yet take my first choice (Est. \$35).

19. Chapman, Samuel H. *Collection of historical coins and medals relating to American history, the Dominion of Canada, and awards to Indian Chiefs and British*

*regal and war medals formed by W.H. Hunter, Esq., Toronto*. Philadelphia: Samuel T. Freeman & Co., December 9-11, 1920. 92 pp., 856 lots, 9 pl.

A definitive reference for Indian Chief peace medals, Canadian coins and early war medals, the catalogue includes a side-view halfpenny and a P.E.I. "sheaf-of-wheat." Adams (no. 22) rated overall A+, Canadian A. Although technically outside of the 19th century, I have included the Hunter cabinet as it would arguably have been the highlight of the Chapman Brothers series overall (in terms of Canadian material) had the two brothers not parted company in 1906 with both brothers continuing to catalogue important collections independently for the next twenty years. Curiously, this sale is the only significant Canadian sale catalogued exclusively by Samuel Chapman (Est. \$150).

There you have it. A dream-listing of 18 sales – the majority of which will undoubtedly become classics with a few non-gems thrown in just to meet the criteria and complete the collection. Even collecting these 18 sales would present enough of a challenge. While some of the catalogues are common enough, still the total estimated value of the 18 sales listed is \$1,740 (going up to \$2,065 if you substitute Hart for Hooper). Of course, you could spend even more for just the right catalogues, with just the right pedigrees. It has to be said that you would undoubt-



edly end up possessing a collection containing some of the highlights in Canadian numismatics in the 19th century.

Nonetheless, I believe that this estimate is probably not unique to the Canadian series. I suspect you would end up with a similar estimate for almost any other collecting speciality you choose. But why would you want to limit yourself to having just any old catalogue that contains nothing of interest to you? After all, forming a type set of this nature is completely different than forming a type set of 19th century American coins. Depending upon your budget, you could certainly build such a type set of coins using any given date (from the commonest to the scarcest) from each series in given any grade (from poor to MS-70). Regrettably, this could not apply to numismatic literature collecting since each publi-

cation in any given series is unique.

Having said this, the catalogues I have selected for my particular dream-collection of 19th century American auction sales containing significant Canadian numismatic material may not be the same as yours. If you have any different selections using the criteria suggested, I would certainly be very pleased to hear them.

I am also working on a similar listing of Canadian sales from Adams Volume II (20th century auction catalogues) using the same criteria as well as a third listing for sales not listed by Adams (i.e. sales conducted outside of the firms published in his two texts, mostly conducted later than the 1950s, as well as those conducted by non-U.S. firms). If there is enough interest I will submit these for publication as well.

## Authoring is the Collecting of Titles

by Michael E. Marotta

Aaron Feldman's premise was that ultimately we would buy the coin. That assumption is false. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Feldman Premise was valid. However, today numismatic bibliomania is a collecting passion in its own right that competes against other collecting interests. It is true that a bibliomaniac might collect coins... or buttons, or stamps, or bird feathers. Those assemblies are causally independent of – though sometimes correlative with – collections of printed information.

For the bibliomaniac, coins and banknotes might be interesting. Certainly, they relate to the primary pursuit of literature about the collecting of money. However, there is no required link between collecting coins and collecting books about coins.

Clifford Mishler has a speech about the continuing diversification and specialization within the hobby of numismatics. At the same time, he says, collecting is "a gene you are born with." People who collect in one area typically collect in others while other people do not collect anything at all.

Mishler's thesis demands that as our speciality continues to mature and evolve, people who collect auction catalogs will differentiate from those who collect economic histories. In 100 years, the ANA Convention might

have the Bowers and Merena Book Special Interest Group (SIG) meeting separately from Bowers and Merena Catalog SIG, the Bowers and Merena Periodicals SIG, and the Bowers and Ruddy SIG.

In the future, meta-collectors will point to numismatic bibliomania and the NBS as the origin of their hobby. In a single auction catalog, you have everything important about every coin listed. The person who has the coin has only an object out of context. The collector of catalogs does not need coins.

When asked what he collected, Walter Breen replied, "Knowledge." Whether an implanted chip, or a direct write to the brain, or a WristROM, in the near future (25 years or less), we will more easily acquire and store the knowledge associated with the objects of study. A meta-collection of memory devices about catalogs would remove the need to collect the catalogs themselves.

In our time, perhaps 90 million people look in their pockets for state quarters. I look in my mailbox for the *Mich-Matist*, and, now the *Centinel* and, of course, *The Asylum*. I write for them (and many others) and then I collect my own works. I have a stack of numismatic articles. I also have a stack of articles about aviation topics, including aviation collectibles. This collection



of articles about aviation collectibles is a numismatic bibliomaniac collection. So are the articles I wrote about the future of cybernetic money that are in an older box of articles I wrote about computerizing.

If I buy a coin, banknote, or token, common or rare, uncirculated or a slider, it has to photograph or scan well. I do not need an item for my collection. I need

an example that I can reproduce for an article. If I can borrow an object or license the rights to an image, so much the better.

By analogy, the possession of property is nothing without title to the property. You can lose sight of – or even control of – the property, but if you hold title, you have the essence of the thing. So, too, in numismatic bibliomania, title is everything.

## **"You Don't Say"**

### **Numismatic Gleanings from the Past**

by Myron Xenos

**Editor's Note:** These are the first of what will be a series of "finds" which the Money Tree's Myron Xenos has discovered among the items in his library.

*Without a doubt, there are among the ranks of numismatists, a fair amount of genius-type people, collectors, authors, and researchers, not to mention those people who have used their knowledge to earn the funds to buy some of the rarer items in our field of endeavor. An article that appeared in the November 20, 1957, edition of the Chicago Daily News explains the plight of one self-professed genius in his efforts to find a genius wife, presumably one with whom he could have intellectual discussions and perhaps sprout future generations of geniuses. Whether it worked or not is a matter for future discussions. But for now, here is the article as it appeared more than 40 years ago off the United Press wire out of New York in Chicago's Daily News.*

#### **Have Genius, Will Marry**

Male members of a "Lonely Genius Club" with a shortage of women are looking for patriotic girl-type geniuses who are willing to wed and produce future generations of geniuses. How do you know you have what it takes to make the I.Q. set?

Talk to Walter Breen, a genial

genius who organized 28 other lonesome intellectuals from coast to coast. Breen, a 27-year-old bachelor and Columbia University pre-med student, claims he can spot a fellow genius through several hours talk and a 14-page test he devised for the purpose.

"Genius must marry genius for the good of the country. One reason we don't have a sputnik up there is that we don't have enough geniuses."

"When two true geniuses marry, they usually produce a little genius. Without this quality in both parents, chances of getting a genius in the family are about one in a million," said Breen, who is one of about 200 persons in the United States with an I.Q. close to 200.

He did four years work and got a B.A. at Johns Hopkins University in one year. Breen aims to campaign for a special school for geniuses as well as to enlarge his own genius club. "It isn't a gag and I'm not a crackpot," he said, displaying a Phi Beta Kappa key. "Most geniuses I know are men. They're lonely and looking for others like themselves. The life of a genius in this country is lonely and frustrating. Most persons have a hostile anti-intellectual feeling that produces academic fossilism." Hard put for genius dates, he knows only 4 single female geniuses--two



under 15 years and 2 over 50. Breen admits taking beautiful-but-dumb (I.Q. 140) types to concerts and the ballet. But he holds that marriage must be a meeting of the minds.

Could the male ego withstand the erosions of living with a woman who's a genius to boot? "Certainly— if he's a true genius. I know a husband and wife (geniuses, naturally) who have been married 20 years and the honeymoon isn't over yet," he said. Clearly a stroke of genius.

*Walter subsequently married sciencefiction writer Marion Zimmer Bradley and had two children, a son and a daughter. As far as this writer knows, neither has gone into space, but then, who knows for sure.*

*Self-promotion by numismatic firms took on a completely different tenor in the earlier days of coin collecting. From the self-aggrandizing verbiage of B.Max Mehl to the image-creating phrases delivered by Stack's, each dealer used the words he thought would attract buyers to his firm. The following was excerpted from Stack's Fixed Price List of 1945-1946. Some call it classic, some call it corny. Whatever you call it, they just don't write 'em that way anymore.*

"This is 12 West 46th Street, New York City...scarcely 50 steps from fabulous Fifth Avenue...a street whose very mention has for generations connotated wealth, opulence and the display of fine things.

Through this door pass perhaps more collectors of coins than any other portal of its type in the world.

And here in comfort, the devotee of numismatics steps from a hubbub of the metropolis into the absorbing atmosphere of ages long since past.

Here we commune with the dim shades of other Fifth Avenues in other Metropoli of other centuries.

At this door we stand on the threshold of history...amid the money, medals, memorabilia of mankind...to view the largest collection of numismatic specimens in the modern world.

Here in the privacy of consultation booths, the owners of rare pieces, the fortunate possessors of duplicate specimens and the men who give circulation to the Numismatic treasures, consult regarding the values, merits, and selling prices of the many items which come to Stack's from all parts of the world.

Over these tables move the famous coin prizes of the great collections, here as in the ancient money marts, the gems of the coinmaker's art reach the crossroads of their ever-exciting careers.

Here the experts inspect and examine some of the rarest of rare coins equipped with a wealth of technical assistance from museums and antiquarian authorities.

Here, at the display tables, the collectors revel in the treasures of their art and science. It may be a youthful novice gathering piece-by-piece the fabled Indian

pennies of an era just past. It may be the quester of a Roman gold piece of Hostilianus Quintus, 248-251 *Anno Domini*. There may come the seeker of Pine Tree shillings, Pioneer gold, or Street Car tokens.

Whatever his whim, he is welcome to come and look and go his way; come and purchase his treasured specimen; show his collection; seek advice or absorb more knowledge from the experts at his beck and call.

Here is spoken the language of the world's most democratic fraternity... the coin collectors.....

Ambassadors, office boys, prize fighters, preachers, doctors, service men, bankers, writers and professors – men from many walks of life, who meet in the great fraternity where the passwords are "mint mark," "milled edge," "obverse," "reverse," "proof," "restrike," "overdate" and dozens of other sesames.

The reception room at 12 West 46th Street is a strange admixture of modern comfort, modern lighting, modern appurtenances....and all the alluring charm of Charles Dickens' beloved Curiosity Shop.

Display cases and tables give promise of things to delight the collector, whatever his bent in the multifarious world of numismatic enthusiasm.

The eye sweeps without effort across glimpses of the trinkets of the Pharaohs, the coins of primi-

tive Polynesians, the medals of the Hapsburgs, the master plaque of the Lincoln penny and the ancient weighing scales of forgotten peoples.

The quiet of carpeted floors and modern upholstery brings an atmosphere of courtesy and respect for the things which are old, beautiful, and rare.

The treasure trove of the collector.....the Hall of Cabinets where coins are no longer money, but masterpieces of the casting, engraving and stamping art.

Here, in endless procession lie the pieces of gold, silver, platinum, aluminum, copper, nickel, bronze and tin...each in its time approved by mastercraftsmen, kings, rajahs, queens, presidents, potentates as the quintessence of the sculptor's art of the time when first they saw the light of day

Here lie the images of rulers and rogues, carefully classified as to rarity, condition and quality by a staff of museum experts, linguists, archeologists and historians.

Unimpressive these serrated knoblets on uncounted trays, but drawn forth to reveal their contents,--

The Wealth of The World glitters for the glory and edification of the most precise, the most erudite and the most enthusiastic fraternity on earth.....

The Numismatists.



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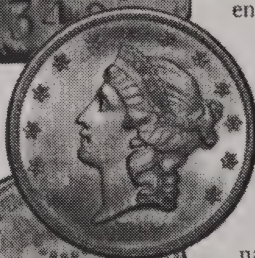
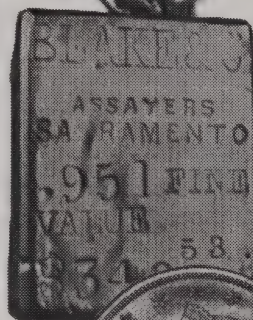
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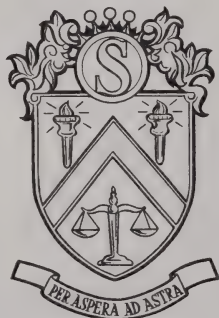
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Volume XX, No. 2

Spring 2002

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*Books that have become classics – books that have had their day and now get more praise than perusal – always remind me of retired colonels and majors and captains who, having reached the age limit, find themselves retired on half-pay.*

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## President's Message

by Pete Smith

Your Numismatic Bibliomania Society Board of Trustees has been discussing the issue of honorary life membership. Currently, the NBS Constitution allows for election to honorary life membership by a vote at our annual meeting. Sadly, there are three problems with this procedure:

1. Our annual meeting typically attracts less than 10% of our members. Consequently, a vote may not represent the viewpoint of our broader membership.

2. The solution of requiring a vote from the general membership will obviously alert a candidate that he/she is being considered for the honor.

3. Even worse, if the candidate were to fail to receive the required number of votes, he/she would suffer the public humiliation of being rejected for honorary life membership.

We are proposing that the constitution be amended to allow granting of honorary life membership by action of the Board of Trustees. If you are interested in checking out our constitution, it was published in *The Asylum* in 1998 (vol.16/3). It is also available on our website – [www.coinbooks.org](http://www.coinbooks.org).

In 1989 the NBS gave an hono-

rary life membership to Frank Katen. With his death, there are no current honorary life members.

The proposed amendment to the constitution is as follows:

To delete from Article II, Section 3, this sentence:

Election to honorary life membership, upon recommendation of the Board of Trustees and written notification to the membership at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting, shall be held by ballot of the eligible voting members at the annual meeting of the society.

And in its place this sentence:

Honorary life membership may be awarded with the approval of two-thirds of the Board of Trustees.

The current NBS Board supports this proposal. A ballot is included with this issue.

Also in this issue is the ballot for our annual NBS Writer's Award. Since 1998, the Society has presented awards in first, second and third place for the best articles in our journal. The awards will be presented during our membership meeting at the ANA convention in New York.

## Secretary/Treasurer's Message

by David Sklow

Let me take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the members who have made the NBS what it is today! We are once again growing and expanding our membership base. We now have 347 members.

It takes the work and cooperation of all to make the NBS a success. I am asking all members to please try to submit your dues payment at the beginning of the calendar year; this way, the Society can run more smoothly and follow a budget. I would also like to ask all members to consider writing for *The Asylum*. We are in great need of articles and book reviews for the upcoming issues!

With the ANA convention in New York just around the corner, I would like to ask for donations for our annual fund raising auction. Please contact me or any Board member concerning a donation.

I would also like to make the membership aware that the NBS does indeed have a membership category for life membership. The constitution and bylaws state that life membership is available at the rate of twenty times the normal yearly membership, which would put the current rate at \$300 based on our

\$15 annual dues. Please contact me if you are interested in becoming a life member.

It is very important that all members keep the Secretary/Treasurer informed of any changes in their mailing or email addresses. Please send notice of address changes as soon as they occur. Having the wrong address delays delivery of *The Asylum* and costs the Society more for postage. I would like to remind all members that the NBS has a large list of available back issues of *The Asylum*. These issues can be purchased for \$5 per issue, post paid. The list of available issues appears on a separate page of the journal. There is only one official mailing address for the NBS: NBS Secretary/Treasurer, P.O. Box 76192, Ocala, FL 34481. Please send all requests to this address.

In case any of the members were unaware, there is a category for numismatic literature exhibits at the annual ANA convention. It is class #22 and entrants compete for the Aaron Feldman Memorial Award. We need members to exhibit in this class!

I hope to see everyone in New York at our annual meeting and symposium.

## Plagiarism or Cooperation?: Two Identical Premium-Paid Lists of the Late Nineteenth Century

by David F. Fanning\*

I recently came into possession of a late nineteenth-century premium-paid (or prices-paid-for) list by the firm, unknown to me at the time, of the Bogert and Durbin Company of New York and Philadelphia. The specifications of the list are as follows:

*The Coin and Stamp Premium List. Being One of the Few Lists Issued by Reliable Coin Dealers. Prices Paid for All Desirable American Coins, Stamps and Paper Money, by the Bogert & Durbin Co.* Printed by the Broadway Printing Company, 56 E. 10th Street, New York. 24 pages, card covers. 8.5 by 5.5 inches. Undated, but probably between 1892 and 1895.

I purchased the list off a popular online auction site. I remember that as the photo slowly loaded onto my computer screen, I thought that the person selling it had made a mistake in cataloguing it as a Bogert and Durbin list because I instantly recognized the list's lengthy title as being identical to one used by the New York Coin and Stamp Company. However, as the photo of the list's front cover

finally emerged at the bottom of my screen, I found that the seller was correct – the list did seem to be a publication of Bogert and Durbin.

I enjoy collecting the kind of stuff which even most NBS-types would regard as being little more than curious junk with almost no research value. That being the case, I placed a bid on the list and was pleased to find a couple days later that I had won the lot. What follows is a chronological account of how I went about trying to determine the answer to some questions raised by this premium-paid list.

Between my winning the lot and receiving it in the mail, I did two things. First, I located my copy of the New York Coin and Stamp Company premium-paid list whose title I had recognized as being identical to the Bogert and Durbin list I had just won. Sure enough, I wasn't misremembering – the titles were identical. Strange. Then, I tried to find out who this Bogert and Durbin were. I looked first to see if the premium-paid list was mentioned in Remy Bourne's

\*The author would like to thank Joel Orosz for his contributions to this article, in particular for his allowing me to quote private email correspondence between us. I also wish to acknowledge the help given me by Maria Manko regarding the history of printing technology. However, any errors of fact or interpretation in this work are entirely my own.



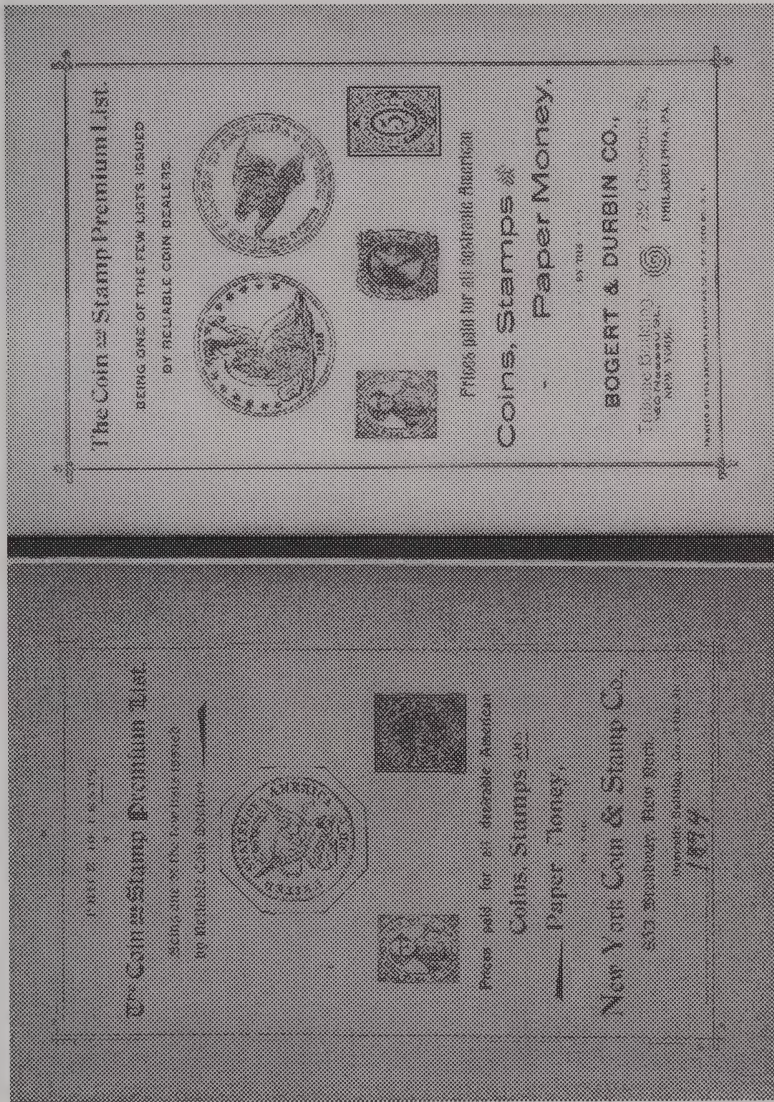


Figure 1 — The premium-paid list published by the New York Coin and Stamp Company (left) with the list published by the Bogert and Durbin Company (right).

book on the subject for the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The firm was unmentioned. I then checked Gengerke to see if he had listed the firm as having conducted auctions.<sup>2</sup> No luck there, either.

When the package arrived, I sat down to take a close look at both the newly-arrived list and the New York Coin and Stamp Company list [Figure 1]. I wanted to see if they shared more similarities than their somewhat awkward title.

They were essentially identical. Page by page, item by item, they matched up in nearly every way. Though both lists are 24 pages in length, the only substantial differences are as follows:

1. The use of running heads by the New York Coin and Stamp Company and the insertion of their name in a couple other places throughout the list. These are not present throughout the Bogert and Durbin list. Bogert and Durbin's name does not appear anywhere except once on the front cover of their list.

2. The art on the cover. The art selections on the front covers of the two lists are different, though each selection is taken from the line art illustrations throughout both texts.

3. The list by the New York Coin and Stamp Company is priced at ten cents on the cover, whereas no price appears on the Bogert and Durbin version.

The fact that the lists seemed

to be identical puzzled me, but I recalled reading somewhere that occasionally numismatic firms of the time period would share or simply steal each other's lists. Surely the publisher of these two specimens must be the same.

Nope. They weren't even in the same state. In contrast to the bibliographic entry for the Bogert and Durbin list given at the beginning of this article, the entry for the New York Coin and Stamp Company list runs as follows:

*The Coin and Stamp Premium List. Being One of the Few Lists Issued by Reliable Coin Dealers. Prices Paid for All Desirable American Coins, Stamps and Paper Money, by the New York Coin & Stamp Co.* Printed by the Meriden Gravure Company of Meriden, Connecticut. 24 pages, card covers. 8.5 by 5.5 inches. Undated, but hand-dated 1894 on the cover, a date which seems reasonable to me due to the large amount of Columbus material advertised in the list and on the covers.

Time to call in the experts. I put out a message on the *E-Sylum*, the weekly email bulletin of the NBS and quite probably the single best way to simultaneously reach any number of experts on numismatic literature. In the weeks that followed, I had only one correspondent on the subject – Joel Orosz, who had never heard of the firm,

<sup>1</sup> R. Bourne, *Fixed Price List* (sic) and *Prices Paid For List's* (sic) of *United States Coin Dealers, 1822-1900*, (Minneapolis, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> M. Gengerke, *American Numismatic Auctions*, 8th ed., (Woodside, 1990).



either.<sup>3</sup> If you don't know Joel, there's very little he hasn't heard of, particularly in the area of numismatic literature. He likes a good mystery, though, and this one had him stumped.

The possible scenarios we came up with over the next couple weeks were as follows:

**Scenario 1.** That the Bogert and Durbin list was a fraud, illegitimately copied from a well-established company's list. As Joel put it: "I wonder if it was a scam – since the chances of two dealers issuing an identical prices paid for list at the same time seems highly unlikely. Bogert & Durbin could have copied a legit list and bilked a few folks who sent them coins."

Evidence in favor of this interpretation: that the lists are nearly identical; the removal of the New York Coin and Stamp Company's name; the fact that the firm of Bogert and Durbin is unknown today; that Bogert and Durbin used a different printer than the New York Coin and Stamp Company.<sup>4</sup>

Evidence against: in Joel's words, "the fact that the hobby back then was much smaller and less lucrative than it is today"; the unlikelihood of finding a

printer willing to spend the time reproducing a 24-page list word for word; that Bogert and Durbin list addresses at 160 Nassau Street in New York and 722 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia and having two offices in major cities seems unlikely if this was just a scam.

Verdict: possible, but unlikely.

**Scenario 2.** That Bogert and Durbin were a successor firm to the New York Coin and Stamp Company.

Evidence for: that the lists are nearly identical except for the removal of the New York Coin and Stamp Company's name (a successor firm would presumably continue to use much of the predecessor firm's property, including templates for publications — removing the old name would not be especially difficult and would be necessary as well).

Evidence against: the New York Coin and Stamp Company was around until at least 1908 and this list is almost certainly from the 1890s; the prices, one would expect, would also be different if this were a later production and the list would include later dates; the successor firm would almost certainly insert their name into the pages where

<sup>3</sup> Neither the firm nor its principals are listed in R. W. Mercer, *The Numismatic Directory for 1884*, (Cincinnati, 1884). In the *Coin Collector's Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 5 (October 1884), E. L. Mason highlights a Leon W. Durbin in his "Eminent Numismatists, Past and Present" series: this may or may not be the Durbin of Bogert and Durbin. By 1884, however, Leon Durbin was primarily a stamp dealer, not a coin dealer.

<sup>4</sup> It seems safe to dismiss the notion that the New York Coin and Stamp Company stole the list from Bogert and Durbin, as the former were a well-established firm by this point and were fully capable of producing their own lists. Plus, as I attest later in this piece, the list was almost certainly written by the New York Coin and Stamp Company's David Proskey.



the predecessor firm's name had been; if there was a successor firm, this would very likely be known to some of the NBS people.

Verdict: Joel and I decided that Bogert and Durbin were almost certainly not a successor firm to the New York Coin and Stamp Company.

**Scenario 3.** That Bogert and Durbin were a subsidiary firm of New York Coin and Stamp or were affiliated with them in some other way that would make their publishing the same list legitimate.

Evidence for: that the lists are nearly identical, suggesting cooperation between business partners.

Evidence against: as Joel pointed out in an email, "it seems a bit early to have done that"; one would think the smaller, less prestigious firm would make mention of the fact that they were allied with a larger, well-known company; it seems strange that Bogert and Durbin is all but forgotten today if they were an affiliate of the New York Coin and Stamp Company, which is still well known.

Verdict: possible, but unlikely.

Closer examination of the lists deepened the mystery. Not only did I find the lists essentially identical when examining the major elements of the text, but, by paying attention to irregularities in type formation, it became clear to me that these lists were printed from the same plates. Not only are the prices and listings identical, along with the art throughout, but so are the ran-

dom blobs of ink and misshapen letters that result from the less than careful production of printing plates [Figures 2 and 3].

Bogert and Durbin, then, would have needed access to the exact physical plates used by the New York Coin and Stamp Company for their printing, or so it would appear. This implies some measure of cooperation between the firms, advancing the cause of Scenario 3 above.

That the same printing plates were used raises the possibility of there being some measure of cooperation between the printing firms: the Meriden Gravure Company of Meriden, Connecticut (used by the New York Coin and Stamp Company) and the Broadway Printing Company of New York city (used by Bogert and Durbin). Thus, I developed a fourth and fifth scenario.

**Scenario 4.** That the printing firms involved cooperated and used plates originally commissioned by the New York Coin and Stamp Company as generic templates for others to use.

Evidence for: the plates obviously somehow got from the one printer to the other; plates would have little value once used for their original purpose unless, with some very simple modifications, they could be used to fill an order from an additional customer (who might not have to pay as much, as the plates wouldn't have to be made from scratch — hence, a small firm might be able to afford to produce a premium-paid list that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive).

I799	Five stars on right.	\$2.00 to \$2.50
I799	.....	1.25 to 1.50
I800	.....	1.25 to 2.00
I801	.....	1.50 to 2.50
I802	.....	1.50 to 2.00
I803	.....	1.50 to 2.25

Figure 2 — Close-up of part of the text from the New York Coin and Stamp Company list. Note the botched dollar sign in the first line.

I799	Five stars on right.	\$2.00 to \$2.50
I799	.....	1.25 to 1.50
I800	.....	1.25 to 2.00
I801	.....	1.50 to 2.50
I802	.....	1.50 to 2.00
I803	.....	1.50 to 2.25

Figure 3 — Close-up from the Bogert and Durbin list of the same material shown in Figure 2. Note that the botched dollar sign in the first row is present, confirming that these lists were printed from identical plates.

Evidence against: not much, except that this seems a little far-fetched.

Verdict: entirely possible. Perhaps to avoid the embarrassment of having their duplicated list circulate in New York along with the New York Coin and Stamp Company's original list, the Bogert and Durbin list only circulated out of their Philadelphia office.

**Scenario 5.** That the printing firms involved cooperated and offered customers generic plates for such an item, which could be individualized by the addition of a firm's names, and that the New York Coin and Stamp Company and Bogert and Durbin both took advantage of this.

Evidence for: none, but theoretically possible.

Evidence against: it seems highly unlikely that the New York Coin and Stamp Company would have to rely upon a generic template to produce their premium-paid lists. The coin market was so much smaller than it is today, the notion that printers would have a generic premium-paid template (that would have to be updated every now and then) they could offer to customers is most improbable. Also, there are indications throughout the list (such as the commentary that there are no known original 1804 dollars and that any dollars of that date are restrikes) which bear the mark of having been written by New York Coin and Stamp Company manager David Proskey (whose name appears on the inside front cover of their list).

Verdict: almost certainly not the case. The list was almost positively written by Proskey.

By this point, I had determined that the most likely scenarios were numbers two and four, with the latter being more credible. However, while discussing this article with my fiancée, Maria Manko, she suggested that Bogert and Durbin may have been able to have new plates made through a photographic technique requiring nothing but access to a paper copy of the New York Coin and Stamp Company list. They would have had to cover up or obliterate anything on the plates they didn't want to include (such as the running heads), but that would be easy to accomplish.

With this in mind, I decided to see if I could find any trace of the New York Coin and Stamp Company running heads on the Bogert and Durbin list. I figured that if they had obliterated or otherwise tried to remove the heads, some evidence may remain of their having done so.

And sure enough, that's the case. Each page of the New York Coin and Stamp Company list has the following running head along with the page number: New York Coin and Stamp Co., 853 Broadway, New York.

A close examination of the Bogert and Durbin list showed the remnants of the lower-case p in "Stamp" on page 11 and the full comma following "Broadway" on page 20 [see Figures 4 and 5]. There is no mistaking these remnants as anything else



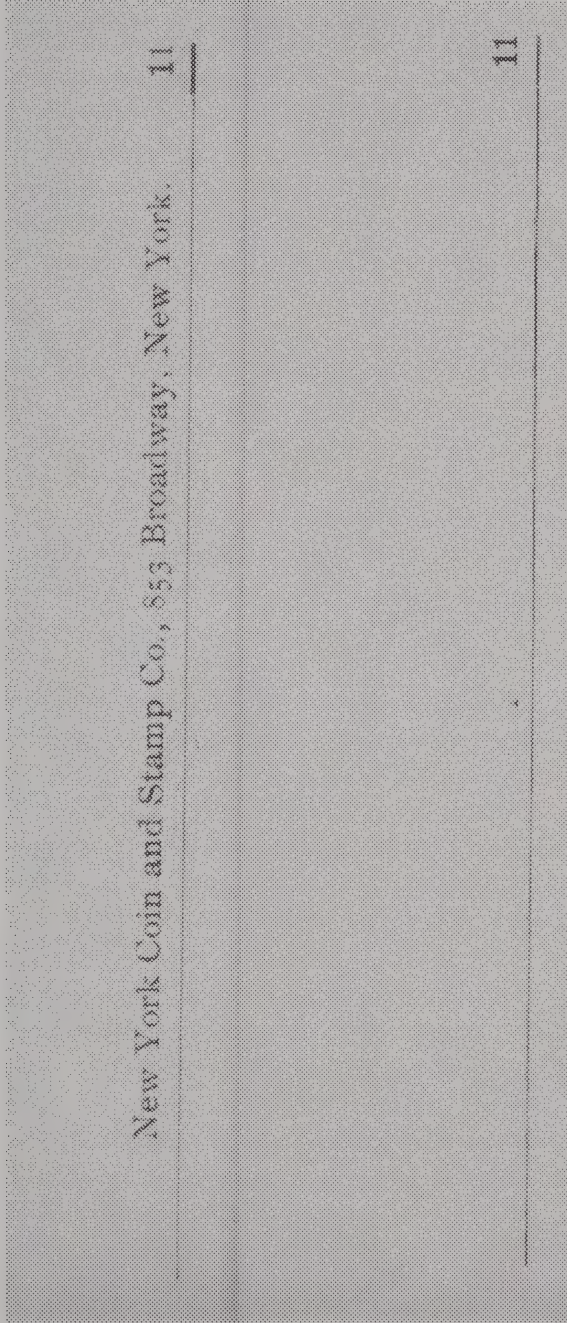


Figure 4 — (above) the original running head published in the New York Coin and Stamp Company list; (below) the remnant of a lower-case *p* shows through on the Bogert and Durbin list, where it was incompletely obliterated during production of the printing plates.

– they are as clear as could be. They align perfectly with the location of the running head in the New York Coin and Stamp Company list. This is direct evidence that Bogert and Durbin did, without a doubt, use the New York Coin and Stamp Company list and try to remove all reference to the original publisher and pass it as their own.

This changes things. Some of the scenarios listed above remain valid. The primary questions to be asked have shifted somewhat, however:

1. Did they have permission to reproduce the list? It seems likely that, if Bogert and Durbin had offices in New York City and if this list was going to be circulated there, the New York Coin and Stamp Company would soon enough find out about it if they did not authorize its use. Did Bogert and Durbin only circulate this in Philadelphia, the other city in which they seem to have had offices? If so, the New York Coin and Stamp Company would find out about it soon enough, having plenty of customers there. (The person from whom I purchased the list is in Nebraska, so no clues there.)

2. How did the Bogert and Durbin Company reproduce the list? Did they have access to the metal plates (which would imply cooperation on either the part of the New York Coin and Stamp Company or the printers) or did they have new plates made through a photographic technique (which they could do surreptitiously)?

This boils down quickly to the

following scenarios:

**Scenario A:** The Bogert and Durbin Company had the permission of the New York Coin and Stamp Company to reproduce the list. If so, then Scenario 3, listed above, would appear to be the correct answer to this puzzle. The method of reproduction becomes irrelevant. However, I find this situation to be unlikely for the reasons given in Scenario 3.

**Scenario B:** The Bogert and Durbin Company did not have permission to reproduce the list and did so surreptitiously and possibly as part of a scam. They did, however, have access to the metal plates used to print the New York Coin and Stamp Company list, and so the printer was likely involved in the scam to some degree. This combines Scenario 1 and Scenario 4. I feel that the more people involved, the less likely a scenario is, and so I feel hesitant to give this one much credence.

**Scenario C:** The Bogert and Durbin Company did not have permission to reproduce the list and did so surreptitiously and possibly as part of a scam. They did not have access to the metal plates used to print the New York Coin and Stamp Company list, and had to find a printer willing to reproduce the plates photographically. If the business ethics of the printer are reflected in the quality of the printer's work, this seems to fit the bill. This combines Scenario 1 with the new evidence introduced by the remnants of the running heads and the information given

20 New York Coin and Stamp Co., 853 Broadway, New York.

20

Figure 5 — (above) the original running heads published in the New York Coin and Stamp Company list; (below) a comma remains where the running head was incompletely obliterated for the production of the Bogert and Durbin list; note the skewed page number, crudely corrected after having been accidentally eradicated.



to me by Maria regarding printing technology.

Unfortunately, I have no definite solution to this mystery. I very much suspect that Scenario C (the modified Scenario 1) is the correct answer to the puzzle posed by this bit of numismatic ephemera, but I can't prove this beyond the shadow of a doubt. If it was part of a scam, it is likely that it was printed in the hopes that some people would send in coins quickly enough that they could (quite literally) take the money and run before New York

Coin and Stamp realized what they were up to.

In the course of studying this list, I've changed my mind several times regarding it and its status. Hopefully, the recounting of my efforts to shed light on the list are interesting for methodological reasons if for no other. If any NBS member has some information to add that could help clear up the questions raised here, please contact me at the mailing address or email address given on the first page of this journal.

## New Members

Raymond Flanigan, Leland,  
North Carolina

Jeffrey Gresser, Las Vegas,  
Nevada

Alan Herbert, Belle Fourche,  
South Dakota

Robert Heisley, Cleveland, Ohio  
(Life Member)

Amanda Rondot, Ft. Wayne,  
Indiana

Alan Roy, Toronto, Ontario,  
Canada

Bob Schreiner, Chapel Hill,  
North Carolina

David Wnuck, Wallingford,  
Connecticut

## Some Notes on Archives

by Q. David Bowers

### Getting Rid of "Stuff"

"Like barbarians sacking Rome, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office is willfully destroying much of its historical files, which date back to 1790 and are a fabulous 'paper trail' of the extraordinary inventiveness and innovation of Americans. The agency says it is scanning and digitizing this treasure trove, so there is no need to keep the documents. Anything the office considers to be 'historic papers' is being preserved or turned over to the National Archives. By that criterion they would presumably save the Constitution and, say, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, but would incinerate millions of other documents." This item, in *Forbes* magazine, went on to say that, fortunately, at least some of the stuff has been saved by "one appalled individual, Randy Rabin, [who] has been going through Patent Office trash bins and [has] retrieved countless documents, including some bearing the name of T.A. Edison."

In the meantime, for many years various university, town, city, and state libraries have been discarding original copies of magazines, newspapers, and other items, sometimes micro-filming them and sometimes not. Usually, these papers are thrown in the trash bin (as the Library of Congress has done) or are sold in bulk to dealers.

The problem with this is that microfilm images can be and often are out of focus, or too dark, or have other problems. Also, microfilm is the state of the art circa the late 1930s, and, as in many instances the originals have been lost, there is no way that a good copy can be made today from a fuzzy, poorly shot microfilm. Also, as many readers know, nearly all images prior to the 1870s are line engravings, not halftones. These line engravings, with a wealth of detail, do not and never did copy well onto film. Today, there are some high-resolution, digital-imaging scanners that can do a decent job of copying engravings, if originals can be found.

### What to Do?

Having spent more than a little time in the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the American Numismatic Society library and a few dozen other such repositories, I have gained what I believe are some insights.

First, most general libraries run by local, state, or the national government simply store old newspapers, files, etc. Relatively few have loving curators who really appreciate what they have. More often than not, especially with large city and government repositories, many of the employees are simply working there because it is a job – nothing more, nothing less. Accord-

ingly, it is a false dream to expect that such employees will cherish the treasures on their shelves.

In contrast, a library specifically set up to care for items of importance, and with knowledgeable curators (the American Numismatic Association, American Numismatic Society, Beinecke, American Antiquarian Society, Bancroft, Widener, Huntington, and certain other libraries are examples), do appreciate what they have.

Recommendation: town, state, and government libraries with valuable treasures should turn them over to specialized libraries as above.

In any and all events, as budgets permit (a key consideration, I realize), libraries should digitally scan in high resolution as many of their treasures as possible, and then place the treasures in a safe, dry place, so that if a generation from now an improved copying system is devised, the originals will still be there.

Such digital scans also have the advantage that they can be easily copied, transmitted over the Internet, and in some instances, actually translated into digital words for analysis.

### Library Users

Unfortunately, the users of libraries are often a part of the problem. All one has to do is read through a handful of issues of the *Manuscript Society Newsletter* to find multiple instances in which trusted researchers and scholars and even longtime curators, have

filched valuable things. This is a common occurrence. Digitizing the originals can help with this, but probably never can prevent curator theft.

Moreover, in large city libraries, users often damage original copies. About 20 years ago, my wife Christie went to the New York Public Library to do research on Robert Robinson, a prominent illustrator in the early twentieth century, who did many covers for *The Saturday Evening Post* and other popular magazines. She found that the NYPL's collection of original copies of this particular magazine had been largely devastated by having the Norman Rockwell covers scissored and razored out (but most Robinson covers were still intact, as Robinson was not a well known name).

Also, in many if not most large city libraries, if you fill out call slips for, say, 20 to 40 different items, a handful will be reported as simply "missing." Perhaps they have been missing for years. Who knows?

As if the foregoing were not enough to consider, beginning in a large way in the 1880s, and continuing for a long time afterward, most paper used for periodicals had high sulfur content. In time, residual sulfur made the pages brittle. Thus, magazines, directories, and books of the 1880s through about 1910 in particular, even if handled carefully, will break and chip. I recall that around 1975, I spent a few days at the New York Historical Society looking through directories. On the shelf of city directo-



ries for the 1880s and 1890s were hundreds of little yellowed chips and particles that had fallen from these volumes. Ironically, early newspapers and books were often made of very high quality rag-content paper, with the result that a copy of the *San Francisco Herald* from 1854 is strong and durable today and can be handled without fear of damaging it.

### Short Takes

Today, a private library gathered by a careful, loving collector is often a great repository for old newspapers and books. Without a doubt, such gentlemen as Harry W. Bass, Jr., Dan Hamelberg, John W. Adams, Armand Champa, and others have aided in the preservation of such treasures by carefully storing them and, in some instances, incorporating them into high quality protective bindings.

When I was a student at the Pennsylvania State University, I sought to take out a particular historical volume, but was told that it was an "overnight" book only. As it had hundreds of pages, there was no way that I could digest it in one evening. I looked at the slip pasted in the book, and found that it had last been checked out in 1879! So much for it being so popular that it could not be loaned out for at least a few days! I thought this was hilarious.

Recently at the New Hampshire State Library in Concord (which is a marvelous archive, well kept) my secretary, Carol Travers, and I had occasion to spend a few days digging into

state banking, legislative, and financial records. Interestingly, certain journals of the New Hampshire House of Representatives from the 1840s had been stored by this library and its predecessors for over a century and a half, and we were the first people to look at certain pages (as they were not cut apart yet at the edges)! The librarian was familiar with such situations, and allowed us to cut them carefully.

In another instance, I knew that early in the nineteenth century there was a legislative investigation of the New Hampshire Bank in Portsmouth. When we delved into the original records filed by banks, beginning in 1814, all of the New Hampshire Bank reports were in a little pile by themselves – apparently having been segregated about 180 years ago during the investigation, and left that way ever since.

As a class, research librarians are among the nicest people I know. They are eager to help with searches, and they enjoy it when someone appreciates their archives.

For a number of summers I've spent a week each year "living" in the American Numismatic Association library in Colorado Springs, and each time I might have well have been on vacation – a warm and fuzzy experience.

To own books is to love them. Just about any numismatist I know is very proud of his or her library, especially if it contains items that are interesting and seldom encountered.

## A Misnomer Mystery Finally Solved by David Cassel

This work is intended as a follow up to a subject which I briefly addressed in my *United States Pattern Postage Currency Coins*, which was published in 2000. The following material is an update of one of the most puzzling aspects of my earlier research, the "Koulz's Alloy" ten cent pattern coins of 1869 (Judd 716/Pollock 795), which were struck in an alloy of silver, nickel, and copper.

From a technical standpoint, I will make no changes to what is presented in Chapter 9 of my monograph, which deals with the postage currency related pattern dimes of 1869. My continuing research in this area involved not only the coins, but more so, the man...or, better, the misnomer. But first, let me lay the groundwork by restating a portion of Chapter 9, which dealt with the "Koulz's Alloy" pattern coins. For the following passage will set up my update.

A supposed German chemist, Koulz was the inspiration for both the first reverse design, "SIL.9" over "NIC.1" above a line which is over the date "1869" and second reverse design elements, "SIL." over "NIC." over "COP." above a line which is over the slightly curved date "1869." An effort to garner some additional information on Koulz proved fruitless. Regrettably, this cataloger, with the

help of numismatists in Germany and the United States using the facilities of libraries, encyclopedias and the Internet, could come up with not a single reference to Koulz, not even his first name, except that in the 600 page German lexicon, Koulz may not be a German name.

What little we know originated in a booklet entitled *Suggestions to Congress of the Finances of the United States* submitted to the Chamber of Commerce of New York, by H.E. Moring in 1869. This is where, more or less, from the earliest pattern book reference to Koulz found in the Adams and Woodin *United States Pattern, Trial, and Experimental Pieces*, published in 1913 and reprinted in 1959, Dr. Judd, Andrew Pollock and now this cataloger essentially restate what, according to Andrew Pollock III, in *United States Patterns and Related Issues* was offered:

In 1869 the Mint experimented with an alloy consisting of 41% copper, 33% nickel, and 26% silver. The alloy was invented by the German chemist, Koulz, and promoted by a New York chemist [and Metallurgist, Stefan] Krackowizer. Dr. Judd in his pattern book quotes the commentary of W.E. DuBois who describes the alloy as follows: 'Mr. Eckfeldt made a small bar, and

# Best Article in The *Asylum* for 2001

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- ☐ "An Overview of Copyright Law for Numismatists," by Ben Keele
- ☐ "A Plea for Help and Understanding," by J. D. McCarthy
- ☐ "Bibliomaniacs Share in ANA Exhibit Hall," by John Kraljevich
- ☐ "Book Review: Glenn R. Peterson's *The Ultimate Guide to Attributing Bust Half Dollars*," by Michael E. Marotta
- ☐ "Frank J. Katen," M. A. Powells and Frank Causey Wilson's *Bulletin*," by Wayne K. Homren
- ☐ "Frank Joseph Katen: Pathfinder of Numismatic Literature," by Joel J. Orosz
- ☐ "Frank Katen – An Appriciation," by George F. Kolbe
- ☐ "Frank Katen vs The ANA," by Pete Smith
- ☐ "News from the Net (Spring)," by Pete Smith
- ☐ "News from the Net (Summer)," by Pete Smith
- ☐ "Sitting on the Shelf," by Karl Moulton



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- ☐ "The Printer's Devil: William Gowans and the Contents of the Three Earliest Significant Sales of Numismatic Literature," by Joel J. Orosz with the assistance of George F. Kolbe and Malgorzata Fort
- ☐ "The Roman Imperial Coinage: The History of a Remarkable Series," by Douglas Saville

**Please send ballot to:**

**Tom Sheehan**

**PO Box 1477**

**Edmonds, WA 98020**

**Ballots must be received by 19 July 2002**

- ☐ "The Holy Grail," by Bob Schuman
- ☐ "The Origin of Coin World Annual Book Edition and Remembrances of Frank J. Katen," by D. Wayne Johnson
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gave it three meltings. It rolled down with great difficulty, splitting and cracking in spite of all the precaution and annealings. Mr. Barber made a reverse to try it under the press (using the dime head for the obverse,) and a faint impression was produced in the steam press. The metal is totally unfit for coinage, and the color is bad.' Director Pollock considered the 'Koulz's alloy' coinage at some length in his Annual Report of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1869.... 'Under the coining press it was barely possible to produce a feeble impression, on account of the intense hardness, and danger both of breaking the dies and flawing the planchet. In short, nothing could be more unfit for coinage.'

With the obverse designed in 1836 by Christian Gobrecht and redesigned in 1859 by James B. Longacre, dimes were created with the dateless Seated Liberty obverse die created during the transition period of 1859-1860. Note the broken serif of the first S in "STATES." William Barber designed the reverse in 1869. Another interesting mule was created. Once again, a coin having a common die element with the Postage Currency coins was created. 1869 would be the year that the dateless obverse element of the Seated Liberty Postage Currency ten cent coins would see its final appearance with two different reverse designs, each, rather plain.

Now, the fun begins. As previ-

ously noted, no supporting evidence of Koulz (the man) was ever found despite the exhaustive effort of many of my numismatic friends and my own efforts. There is no denying that the rare pattern coins attributed to Koulz do exist.

Reluctantly, we came to the conclusion that the name Koulz may have been a simple typographical error that originated in 1869 with the publication of *Suggestions to Congress of the Finances of the United States*.

We did find a large amount of information on Montchal Ruolz.

Montchal Ruolz was born in Paris in 1809 and died in Neuilly-sur-Seine in 1887. Note the similarity in the spelling of Koulz and Ruolz. It would be simple to transpose uo with ou, especially if a writer in English were translating the work of a Frenchman. Consider how easy it might have been for the author Moring or his stenographer to have heard the name Ruolz and mistaken it for Koulz.

Of the highest consideration is how H.E. Moring may have interpreted the name if it had been seen in old German script. In the old Gothic script the letter K ( $\mathfrak{K}$ ) looks very much like the letter R ( $\mathfrak{R}$ ). If Moring saw an R he might have thought he was looking at a K. Old German script was in common use in nineteenth century Germany, but was less common in America. A drop of water, for example, on the top of the R could blur the letter into looking like a K.

The lifespan of Montchal

# **Proposed Amendment to the Constitution of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society**

To delete from Article II, Section 3, this sentence:

Election to honorary life membership, upon recommendation of the Board of Trustees and written notification to the membership at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting, shall be held by ballot of the eligible voting members at the annual meeting of the society.

And to add in its place this sentence:

Honoary life membership may be awarded with the approval of two-thirds of the Boar of Trustees.

- ☐ I approve
- ☐ I disapprove

**Please send ballot to:**

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**PO Box 1477**

**Edmonds, WA 98020**

**Ballots must be received by 19 July 2002**

gave it three meltings. It rolled down with great difficulty, splitting and cracking in spite of all the precaution and annealings. Mr. Barber made a reverse to try it under the press (using the dime head for the obverse,) and a faint impression was produced in the steam press. The metal is totally unfit for coinage, and the color is bad.' Director Pollock considered the 'Koulz's alloy' coinage at some length in his Annual Report of the fiscal year ending June 30, 1869.... 'Under the coining press it was barely possible to produce a feeble impression, on account of the intense hardness, and danger both of breaking the dies and flawing the planchet. In short, nothing could be more unfit for coinage.'

With the obverse designed in 1836 by Christian Gobrecht and redesigned in 1859 by James B. Longacre, dimes were created with the dateless Seated Liberty obverse die created during the transition period of 1859-1860. Note the broken serif of the first S in "STATES." William Barber designed the reverse in 1869. Another interesting mule was created. Once again, a coin having a common die element with the Postage Currency coins was created. 1869 would be the year that the dateless obverse element of the Seated Liberty Postage Currency ten cent coins would see its final appearance with two different reverse designs, each, rather plain.

Now, the fun begins. As previ-

ously noted, no supporting evidence of Koulz (the man) was ever found despite the exhaustive effort of many of my numismatic friends and my own efforts. There is no denying that the rare pattern coins attributed to Koulz do exist.

Reluctantly, we came to the conclusion that the name Koulz may have been a simple typographical error that originated in 1869 with the publication of *Suggestions to Congress of the Finances of the United States*.

We did find a large amount of information on Montchal Ruolz.

Montchal Ruolz was born in Paris in 1809 and died in Neuilly-sur-Seine in 1887. Note the similarity in the spelling of Koulz and Ruolz. It would be simple to transpose *uo* with *ou*, especially if a writer in English were translating the work of a Frenchman. Consider how easy it might have been for the author Moring or his stenographer to have heard the name Ruolz and mistaken it for Koulz.

Of the highest consideration is how H.E. Moring may have interpreted the name if it had been seen in old German script. In the old Gothic script the letter K (Ꝥ) looks very much like the letter R (Ꝥ). If Moring saw an R he might have thought he was looking at a K. Old German script was in common use in nineteenth century Germany, but was less common in America. A drop of water, for example, on the top of the R could blur the letter into looking like a K.

The lifespan of Montchal



Ruolz (1809 to 1887) is certainly consistent with the design and striking of a coin in 1869. Consider also that author H.E. Moring referred to Koulz as a German chemist in 1869. As you will see, Ruolz was a French chemist.

A French biography states that Ruolz was a scholar and savant who presented at the Opera-Comique in 1830 with F. Halevy.<sup>1</sup> From 1835 through 1839, Ruolz composed operas, cantatas, and melodies. Apparently, he was not all that successful as a composer as his brief career, prompted by a reversal of fortune, led him to study chemistry. It was in this field that the name Ruolz was made famous. Ruolz discovered the process for gilding and silver plating metals by the action of *pile voltaïque* in 1841. He gave the name "Procedure Ruolz" to these operations, through which he could apply with great ease silver or gold to an object by first dissolving silver or gold into cyanide of potassium. In 1855, while serving in the French Artillery, he discovered how to make steel and how to transform phosphorous metals. This French inventor, Henri-Catherine, Count of Ruolz, Montchal, composer and chemist, obtained as many as

seventeen patents in addition to his basic one of 1841. One of these additional patents, the twelfth, relates to the nickel plating of copper, brass, bronze and iron, using a nickel-chloride solution. Montchal Ruolz had studied electrolytic gilding and, on finding that process satisfactory, he generalized it by applying it to the electrodeposition of other metals, such as silver and platinum.

Before long, an unbelievably large number of trade names (some of which were the registered trademarks of the makers) had been coined for this alloy. It was not until the present century that these copper-nickel-zinc alloys came to be known as nickel-silver, but that designation has been included in this list for the sake of completeness.

A partial list of trade names for "nickel-silver" includes nickel oreide, Ruolz's alloy, and white metal.<sup>2</sup> A French patent (10,472) for what is referred to as "Ruolz's alloy" was granted in 1841.<sup>3</sup> What is known as "Neusilber" (new silver) is referred to by many designations including "Ruolz's Alloy."<sup>4</sup> "Ruolz" is defined in a glossary as "A gilded or silvered metal named after the inventor of the process who was a French chemist."<sup>5</sup> Another

<sup>1</sup> F. B. Howard-White, *Nickel. An Historical Review* (Princeton, 1963), p.107

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 273.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 285; Ruolz, Montchal, H.-C. de. *Comptes Rend.*, 1841, 13, 998-1021.

<sup>4</sup> E. Auer, S. Müller, and R. Slotta, *250 Jahre Nickel, Nickel als Münzmetall* (Buchum, 2001) p. 42.

<sup>5</sup> "Treasures-in-Time," a glossary of Jewelry terms, is available on the Internet at [www.treasures-in-time.com/glossary.htm](http://www.treasures-in-time.com/glossary.htm)

source confirms that the galvanic process was perfected in 1839 by the Frenchman Ruolz.<sup>6</sup>

An abandoned process for metal plating by the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century consisted in the placement of gold or money leaf on a support consisting of a plate of copper. This metal plate was replaced by the galvanoplastie. It is a process that consists of depositing the metal on a support and employs the use of electrolysis. The process was discovered in 1840 by Ruolz.<sup>7</sup> Yet another source on the history of plating states that "in 1842 Ruolz succeeded in depositing metallic alloys from solutions of mixed salts."<sup>8</sup>

Other references to Ruolz continue to be found. The Web site of The Daguerreian Society notes that "instructions on electrotype copies of Daguerreotype pictures and Magneto electric and Galvanic gilding and silvering was according to the processes of Elkington [sic], Roulz [sic], and Fitzeau."<sup>9</sup> *Scientific American* mentions that "in 1843, Bunsen, a German, invented a new electric battery, and two years afterward (1845), Elkamton [sic] and Ruolz discovered electro-metalurgy."<sup>10</sup>

Most compelling is a German Web site, "Schmucklexikon" (jewelry dictionary): "Argent Ruolz/Argent Francais 37%

kuper, 25% nickel, 33% silber." (Dictionary definition of argent: archaic silver; figuratively, whiteness, silvery; white; shining.)<sup>11</sup>

Apparently, no recognition from "Schmucklexikon" was given the name Koulz when defining "Ruolz's Alloy," which is not too dissimilar to the 41% copper, 33% nickel, and 26% silver composition, as suggested in H.E. Moring's publication. Recall also that coin 44 (Judd 716/Pollock 795) in *United States Pattern Postage Currency Coins*, when tested by electron microscopic analysis, was shown to contain 27.4% copper, 42.1 % nickel, and 30.4% silver. Other Koulz's Alloy coins have varying proportions of copper, nickel and silver. The actual coin design specified only "SIL., NIC., COP." No attempt to quantify the relative amounts of the metals was offered on the pattern coins.

Another possibility regarding *Suggestions to Congress of the Finances of the United States* is that New York chemist Krackowizer may have either descended from a person who lived in Krackow, Poland, or may be someone pulling our leg, perhaps a "Wizekracker."

We have an overwhelming amount of information published on a scientist, inventor, and chemist with a specializa-

<sup>6</sup> A. Begun, *A Technical Dictionary of Printmaking*, found on the Internet at [www.polymetal.nl](http://www.polymetal.nl).

<sup>7</sup> Found on the Internet, [www.antiquaires-contact.com](http://www.antiquaires-contact.com).

<sup>8</sup> Found on the Internet, [www.nbplating.com/early](http://www.nbplating.com/early).

<sup>9</sup> The Daguerreian Society found on the Internet at [www.daguerre.org](http://www.daguerre.org).

<sup>10</sup> "Patent Office Reform," *Scientific American* n.s. 62/1 (1890), p 83.

<sup>11</sup> "Schmucklexikon," found on the Internet, [www.beyars.com](http://www.beyars.com).

tion in metallurgy by the name of Montchal Ruolz. If one discounts the first mention of "Koulz's Alloy" in *Suggestions to Congress of the Finances of the United States* as well as subsequent references to the alloy based upon the erroneous first mention, we must conclude that the name Koulz was substituted for the name Ruolz. Later mention of "Koulz's Alloy" can be found in *United States Pattern Trial, and Experimental Pieces*

(1913 and 1940) by Adams and Woodin, *United States Pattern, Experimental and Trial Pieces* (1959, 1965, 1970, 1974, 1977 and 1982), by J. Hewitt Judd, *Scott's Comprehensive Catalogue and Encyclopedia of U.S. Coins* (1971), by Don Taxay, *United States Patterns and Related Issues* (1994), by Andrew W. Pollock III, and possibly others.

We have no other information on Koulz, not even a first name. Ruolz rules for me.

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## Bibliomania through the Ages: Four Mini-Reviews by William Malkmus

F. Somner Merryweather, *Bibliomania in the Middle Ages. Being Sketches of Bookworms, Collectors, Bible Students, Scribes and Illuminators, from the Anglo-Saxon and Norman Periods, to the Introduction of Printing into England; with Anecdotes illustrating the History of the Monastic Libraries of Great Britain in the Olden Time* (1930 revision of 1849 edition by H. B. and Walter A. Copinger), 288 pp.

Holbrook Jackson, *The Anatomy of Bibliomania* (1950 single-volume edition; orig. publ. 1930), 668 pp.

Lawrence Clark Powell, *A Passion for Books* (1958), 252 pp.

Nicholas Basbanes, *A Gentle Madness. Bibliophiles, Bibliomanes, and the Eternal Passion for Books* (1995), xvi, 638 pp.

These four books provide a fascinating overview of the structure and history of the affliction which we bear as our middle name. (The popularization of the word "bibliomania" is attributed to Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1776-1847), who used it as the one-word title for a book published in 1809; its prior use has been attested, at least as early as 1750, in a letter from Lord Chesterfield to his son, counseling him against that and other perils.)

Merryweather's book is a rather quaint effort, although probably less so than the original version, not reviewed here. The original (1849) text apparently was made more "politically correct" by the revisers, who explain that "Mr. Merryweather seems to have been a Protestant of the old school, and many of his denunciations are not, perhaps, in the best taste."

The author's preface describes his intent in writing the book, and concludes, "Reader; I have sketched my portraiture; if the expression be ungainly, let us part company at once." It appears this offer may have been taken up, if belatedly, by previous readers, since the copy which this reviewer was privileged to read had been uncut from page 137 on. The knowledge that this was the first time in seventy years that these particular pages had been scanned elicited a feeling of reverence, if not awe, and provided impetus to the project of reviewing this book in *The Asylum*.

The survey begins with the study of monastery libraries and of the monks and the parchments with which they worked prior to the introduction of the printing press. The study goes into great detail, including medieval anti-theft precautions,

a seemingly eternal problem (cf. Powell and Basbanes). Personalities from Adam, Abbot of Evesham to Wulstan, Archbishop of York are introduced, as well as locales ranging from Bury St. Edmonds to York Cathedral. The appearance of the printing press brings this work to its close.

Jackson, in *The Anatomy of Bibliomania*, tells us everything we wanted to know, and considerably more, about the nature of the disease, seeming to have overlooked no possible topic for discussion. The book is divided into thirty-two parts which are further subdivided into 199 sections. Among these section headings one may find quite practical ones such as "Reading at the Toilet" and "Reading Many Books at Once" and the saddest – "On Parting With Books" – as well as esoterica such as "Books Bound in Human Skin."

This latter section is perhaps not as gruesome as it might sound. Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer, received a bequest of the tanned skin from the back and shoulders of a countess whose skin he had once complimented; he used a portion to bind one of his books, *Ciel et Terre*. But at least one donor was able to enjoy his contribution in his lifetime: a Russian poet, who had a book of sonnets bound in his own skin, taken from a leg which was amputated following a hunting

accident.<sup>1</sup>

Other sections, such as "A Glance at Their Anatomy," "Variety of Style and Materials," and "Of Size and Convenience" may cover territory more familiar to readers of *The Asylum*, while "Vain and Pedantic Reading Condemned" and "Whether to Read Quickly or Slowly" may help resolve some of the eternal dilemmas of bibliophiles.

From a half century ago, Powell, in his very subjective *A Passion for Books*, already laments the transformation of librarians into "documentalists" and libraries into "information centers" (not yet "media centers" or worse, in the current newspeak). We get the viewpoint of a very active book collector, aggressively seeking new acquisitions for "his" library. One of his stories (anticipating Basbanes) relates the capture of an almost successful thief attempting to make off with a prize exhibit, *The Bay Psalm Book*.

Powell's book consists of nineteen essays, written between 1948 and 1957. His narrative of having a Gutenberg Bible sitting on his desk evokes a feeling of immediacy and of "being there." This particular tale, unfortunately, lacks a true happy ending, at least in that his institution ultimately decided against the Gutenberg acquisition.

The author, noted for many works on the Southwest, and the founder of the University of

<sup>1</sup> For the do-it-yourselfers in our readership, optimal tanning instructions are provided.

Arizona Library School, died just last year at the age of 94. The reader will note that his use of the word "passion" in his book title is in no sense exaggerated.

The Basbanes text, *A Gentle Madness*, is by far the most colloquial and gripping production. The histories of many bibliophiles are narrated, frequently leaving the reader with a "what next?" urge to read far more than the planned quota before bedtime. The personalities are vividly brought to life, and, as in most areas of life, villains and scoundrels consort with the heroes and saints. The book, as noted in most reviews, opens with the story of Stephen Blumberg, who achieved fame by stealing perhaps as much as twenty million dollars' worth of books from libraries in almost every state in the Union (as well as a few Canadian provinces), apparently clinching the current Guinness world record.<sup>2</sup>

Basbanes interviews Blumberg and covers his trial. As a bit of preemptive advice to our readership, it must be noted that Blumberg did, in fact, try the "not guilty by reason of insanity" plea, although unsuccessfully. He, of course, did not have an official membership to back up his plea. (And, yes, he did have a numismatics shelf in his store-

house.) But, on to less overtly criminal characters.

It is difficult to imagine anyone reading the unresolved story about the meteoric appearance of Haven O'More in the 1970s and 1980s (apparently seeking the title of world's greatest book collector with millions of dollars in hand) without some sort of double-take such as "wha-a-at?" Information required for a full understanding of this situation (such as whose millions of dollars) was still being held under seal by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in the case of Davis v. O'More, at the time of writing of the book. In the reviewer's follow-up file is a note to purchase any subsequent volume providing the resolution to this mystery.

Many more stories are related, most or all of which should be found enjoyable by *The Asylum* readership. For those on a limited budget of time or money, the Basbanes text is hereby most strongly recommended. But following the perusal of *A Gentle Madness*, the reader may be tempted into working backward through this list of titles. The reviewer offers his apologies in advance for not having been able to include Dibdin's 1809 *Bibliomania* in this present set of commentaries.

<sup>2</sup> The actual figure is, of course, difficult to pinpoint; estimates of the value of the purloined volumes range from a conservative five million dollars – a figure entered in his trial – to upwards of the twenty million dollar figure. However, the pallid runner-up to the title registered a mere three-quarters of a million.



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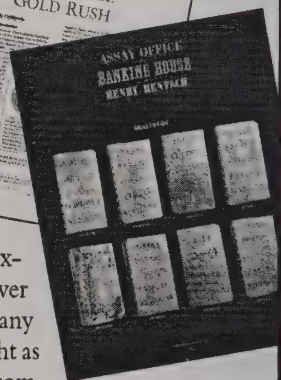
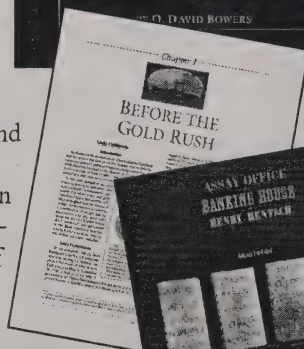
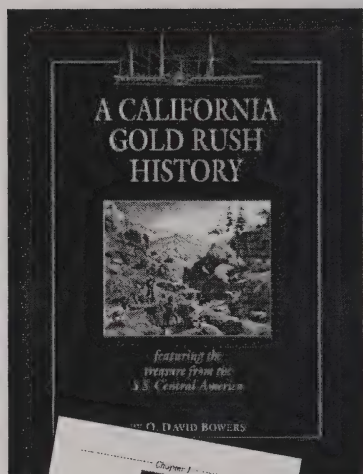
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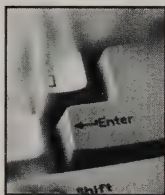


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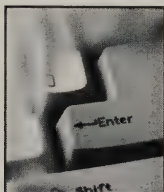
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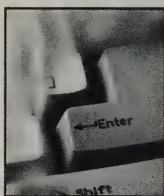
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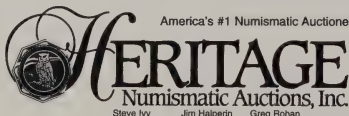
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# THE ASYLUM

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JOHN BETJEMAN

1906-1984

"One of the silliest questions you can ask  
a book collector is, 'Have you read all these?'  
Of course he hasn't. Some books are bought  
to look at, not to read."

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## The Asylum

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## Letters

Dear Editor,

"Some Notes on Archives," by Q. David Bowers in the Spring 2002 issue, brought back some old memories.

After I retired from the U.S. Army in 1981, I dedicated 18 months of Saturdays to researching Southeast Asian numismatics and related fields from A to Z in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. I started every morning with about 20 request forms for books from the stacks. Each day, I tried to scan all of the books, and photocopy the relevant pages with their title and copyright page. But I often had to return some books before closing time and hope to get them back on the next Saturday morning.

At that time, Will Tuchrello was the curator of Southeast Asian material. He observed me for a couple of months and one day offered me a researcher's desk and bookcase where I could keep all of my books until I was done with them. This greatly assisted me because some books were always sitting there when I arrived in the morning. I did not have to waste time waiting for them to come up from the stacks, and I eventually did see everything from A to Z! Will is now the Director of the Library of Congress for Southeast Asia and based in Jakarta, Indonesia. He greatly deserved the promotion and many of us will miss him when he retires in a few years.

As I went through the books at the Library of Congress, I discovered that many of the English-language books with my South-east Asian information and illustrations in them were missing pages. They were very neatly cut out so it would not be noticed. I was outraged. At that time, there were only two or three other numismatists who would have an interest in those pages, and I still have a strong feeling I know who cut out those pages.

During my search, I also discovered several very rare editions in the stacks and requested they be moved to the rare books section, where they could be more closely guarded. Will had this done and hopefully no one has damaged these books. I have made this request at several other libraries around the U.S. and many of my requests were not heeded. When I returned to one library at a prominent Pennsylvania university, a rare French-language Vietnamese-Latin dictionary written by a Catholic priest was missing, two years after I requested it be placed in the rare books section.

As a result of some research, I discovered that a U.S. Navy Lieutenant named Smith made an official visit to Viet Nam in 1819-1820. This was at the time when Emperor Gia Long died and Emperor Minh Mang replaced him. In the report I read, Smith returned with many Vietnamese objects, including coins and bullion bars, which he

donated to what eventually became a prominent museum in Massachusetts. I wrote a letter to the museum with a list of the items and requested an appointment for me to look at them. The answer I received was that when they went to the drawer identified as holding the pieces, it was empty. No one had officially gone to that drawer in over 30 years, so they had no idea when they disappeared.

Those of us who respect books and numismatic pieces that belong to ourselves, others, and the public need to assist owners in preserving them when we see a need for such action. When you see a book or piece which needs to be secured, please talk to the librarian or curator and request that it be placed in a more secure environment.

Howard A. Daniel III

## New Members

BAUMANN, Hans D. — Santiago, Chile  
 GEO, Rusty — Reno, NV  
 HOLCOMB, Eric — Kent, WA  
 TREMMEL, George — Raleigh, NC  
 WILLIAMS, Ray — Trenton, NJ

## The Fascinating Challenge of Numismatic Research

By Q. David Bowers\*

### Introduction

I love numismatic literature and, although I'm a coin dealer, as most of you know, when it comes to research and coins, the more obscure the better. I really do like proof Double Eagles and I like all the rarities, but if someone shows me a token or a medal I have never seen before I'll stop, look and make notes.

First of all, in my opinion there is no single right way or best way to do numismatic research, nor are past credentials (especially in another field) any guarantee of success in numismatic inquiries. Some people have come into the calling who have never done numismatic research before. A good example is Dan Owens, whose book on California assayers has recently been published.<sup>1</sup> He was not known as a numismatist earlier. I'm not aware that he ever did a numismatic book before, or even

an article, but he created a very creditable, indeed authoritative, book on western assayers up to 1863, a field that had been lightly treated at best. Owens now stands as an example of someone who is a very competent numismatic researcher in the highly specialized field of Western Numismatic Americana. I could mention others. R.H. Burnie, in 1955, published a book on small denomination California gold and never published research before then and hasn't since.<sup>2</sup> Ard W. Browning all of a sudden "appeared" in 1925 with his book on early quarter dollars and disappeared from the numismatic limelight just as quickly.<sup>3</sup>

### Well Known Research Personalities

I think the father of American numismatic research, in a popular sense, is the late Walter

\* On August 10, 2001, Bowers spoke to the Numismatic Bibliomania Society annual general meeting during the American Numismatic Association convention in Atlanta. The following is a transcription of his remarks, with a few additions and corrections by the author.

<sup>1</sup> D. Owens, *California Coiners and Assayers* (Wolfeboro, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> R.H. Burnie, *Small California and Territorial Gold Coins: Quarter Dollars, Half Dollars, Dollars* (Pascagoula, 1955).

<sup>3</sup> A.W. Browning, *The Early Quarter Dollars of the United States* (New York, 1925). Recently, some light has been shed upon Browning's career: see C.R. Herkowitz, "Ard W. Browning through a 1920 Looking Glass," *The Asylum* 15/3 (1997), pp. 8-12; idem., "Ard W. Browning Comes Home," *The Asylum* 18 (2000), pp. 115-123; P. Smith, "Names in Numismatics: A Visit to the Grave of Ard Browning," *The Numismatist* 114 (2001), pp. 410-411.



Breen. Walter came on the scene in 1950 and revolutionized numismatic research by going, at Wayte Raymond's request and expense, to the National Archives and unearthing much information. At the same time, Walter was not alone. Eric P. Newman has won more Heath Awards from the ANA than probably — this is not an exaggeration — the next four runners-up combined.

Eric picks a topic, whether it might be Vermont coins, 1773-dated Virginia halfpennies, or the enigmatic Good Samaritan shilling, and he focuses on the topic, doing a fare-thee-well job, neither looking to the right nor to the left. When he's all done, there is not too much more to be found about the given topic. Even today, in 2001, there is little anyone has added to his published scholarship years ago on these and other topics.

Today, the 1804 dollars are far and away the most famous of American coins from a publicity viewpoint. The standard reference on them is by Eric working with Ken Bressett, who also loves research.<sup>4</sup> When I was a teenager in the 1950s, I would correspond with both Eric and Ken on various historical and research matters, and the enthusiasm on the part of all of us is undiminished today.

John Ford Jr., in the 1950s, put out "Numismatica Americana," a

short-lived column in *The Numismatist* which even now is fascinating to read. John has done a tremendous amount of numismatic research, combining the rare talent of making things interesting while describing their historical and technical details.

John suffers from the perfection syndrome. I imagine he would be the first to agree that perfectionism is at once excellent, but also frustrating. John has discovered much which remains today stored in his head. Perhaps someday a lot of this will reach final form. For a number of years, I have been tape recording interviews with John, who has been enthusiastic about sharing his experiences of years ago — beginning in the mid-1930s when he was on the cusp of becoming a teenager. Perhaps a book is in the offing!

The same could be said of B. Max Mehl regarding stored knowledge which never reached print.<sup>5</sup> Mehl was not at all a historian or numismatic researcher, but he had a lot of business transactions, personal experiences, and other things worth sharing, from a career that began circa 1903 and lasted until he passed from the earthly scene in 1957.

I remember having been with B. Max Mehl in the twilight of his life and I had a whole list of questions which I asked him and he answered, and I said, "you

<sup>4</sup> E.P. Newman and K.E. Bressett, *The Fantastic 1804 Dollar* (Racine, 1962).

<sup>5</sup> A summary of Mehl's career may be found in P. Smith, *American Numismatic Biographies* (Rocky River, 1992), pp. 160-161.

know so much and you should write all this down," but he never did and today the only thing that anyone can do is look through his advertisements or minutes of ANA conventions to see what you can find.

### Walter Breen's Hits and Misses

Returning to Walter Breen, his published findings based on research at the National Archives, in libraries and elsewhere were good and bad, a combination of hits and misses.<sup>6</sup> The good thing was that he discovered many things that had not been studied by numismatists before. The bad thing was that he committed much to memory. For example, he went to the Johns Hopkins collection in Baltimore and made mental notes. He was a polymath and could make mental notes, but then when he made up a list of, for example — this is a real example — all known original 1827 quarters, he forgot the Johns Hopkins coin.<sup>7</sup> He just forgot about it. In other instances, he "added" coins to collections that were never there.

And also Walter made a huge number of assumptions and guesses, particularly in the area of mintage figures, restriking activities at the mint, and more.

He would look at a mintage report and if deliveries of coins were made on certain dates, he would say, well then, all in this batch were made from die No. 1, this group is all from die No. 2, and die No. 3 struck precisely 3,245 coins, or whatever. A lot this found its way into the *Guide Book* and now has to be undone. Unfortunately, he did not identify what was a fact and what was a guess.

Also, Walter's reference sources were extremely limited, actually incredibly so. If a coin appeared in a New Netherlands, or Stack's, or Bowers and Merena or Chapman catalogue, it was likely to be cited by him. However, virtually all of the vast repertoire of Thomas L. Elder catalogues — laden with rarities and information — was completely ignored! Similarly, Hollinbeck Coin Co. (the Kagin brothers), Geoffrey Adams, Bangs & Co., and thousands of other auction catalogues were never studied. The published results of Walter's research myopia, once considered to be gospel by the numismatic community, can be rather humorous when read today — check out the rarity comments on Charlotte and Dahlonga Mint gold dollars in his monograph on gold dollars.<sup>8</sup>

Of a politician it was once facetiously said, "I know that

<sup>6</sup> Breen's career is summarized in Smith (1992), pp. 39-40.

<sup>7</sup> W. Breen, "A Coiner's Caviar," *Walter Breen's Encyclopedia of United States and Colonial Proof Coins, 1722-1977* (New York, 1977), pp. 47-48; Breen corrected this error in his *Walter Breen's Complete Encyclopedia of U.S. and Colonial Coins* (New York, 1988), p. 341.

<sup>8</sup> W. Breen, *Major Varieties of U.S. Gold Dollars* (Chicago, 1964).

half of what he says is true. The problem is that I don't know which half!" Probably 80% of Breen's theories and assumptions correlate with facts, and 20% do not — but it is taking an entire cadre of modern researchers to separate fact from guesswork.

And I imagine that among much other published historical research, including things that I've done, there are things that can be challenged at one point or another. However, the research of R.W. Julian, who published much information from the 1960s onward, can today be used with a very high confidence level, as he was and is supercareful.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, on a broad base much of Breen's work might range from assumption to pure fiction, the "Midnight Minters" of 1858 being in the latter category (in my opinion, which, to be fair, invites challenge).

All of this said, Walter Breen deserves a huge helping of credit for creating interest, inspiring others, and blazing the way for modern day scholars. I think all of us in doing anything have to lay a wreath at Walter's grave, figuratively, and say that he opened the area of popular numismatic research.

### **The Rittenhouse Society**

Back about 1955 or 1956, when I was a little kid, I and a few others got the idea for starting the Rittenhouse Society, which came to be formalized, I

believe, in 1960. The idea was that young numismatists, John Kraljevich is a good example today, enjoyed research, but the subject was not all that interesting to older numismatists, particularly dealers. Abe Kosoff was not a researcher, Max Mehl was not a researcher, Abner Kreisberg was not a researcher, and so forth. However, there were a lot of young people who loved research. Grover Criswell liked Confederate currency; Ken Bressett liked Vermont coppers; I liked a little bit of everything (I'm still that way today!), and others had further specialties. We decided that it was good to have a young numismatists society. To join, you could not be more than 30 years old and had to be interested in numismatic research. Well then, several people said, "What about Eric Newman?" What were you, about 31 then, Eric? Anyway he was over the 30 line, so then we dropped the age requirement.

Since then, the Rittenhouse Society has been a fun little group — a number of you in the audience today belong — but the membership is limited by the number of people who can fit around a breakfast table. For years our annual breakfast meeting at the ANA Convention has been an interesting get-together, where a lot of old-timers like Margo Russell, Ken Rendell, and other people that don't show up on the numismatic scene, every once in a while make a trip just for this breakfast. If you are

<sup>9</sup> Julian's career is summarized in Smith (1992), pp. 131-132.



interested in belonging, you should talk to a member and get on the waiting list or something.

### Other Researchers

Returning to research, David W. Akers used the, "Just the facts, ma'am," approach and specifically listed in his memorable series of gold monographs (1975-1982) only the coins he had personally seen, or citations for actual catalogue listings.<sup>10</sup> Thus, today in 2001, the books are still immensely useful, for there are no theories or assumptions that need to be undone.

We also had what Carl W.A. Carlson, who must be included in any listing of numismatic researchers, called "tracking." He wrote an article called "Tracker" for the *ANA Anthology*, a compendium edited by Carl and by Mike Hodder, that went along with the *ANA Centennial History*.<sup>11</sup> Basically what Carl did was read through well-known catalogues, such as by B. Max Mehl, Lester Merkin, New Netherlands, Stack's, my own firm's, and so forth, and came up with a list. The result was the creation of a commentary such as: "1873-CC Quarters without arrows at date: Specimen No. 1 went from Collection A to B to C

to D to E."

The only problem with this is that while it is a good jumping-off spot, it is not at all definitive. However, in a relative sense, if Carl assumed that only ten pieces existed of a certain coin, then for sure it is rare. However, whether there are actually eight pieces in existence (as some of Carlson's listings may have been duplicate records of the same coin) or whether there are twenty is not known.

This came home to me recently in a project that Remy Bourne in particular has helped with, that of compiling a database on United States gold coins. I and several helpers are looking through over 10,000 auction catalogs and fixed price lists dating back to the early nineteenth century. I have found countless listings for major rarities that were not recorded by Breen or anyone else in modern times. I guarantee if anyone wants to do the same thing for pattern coins, they will be amazed with all they discover. Ditto for territorial gold.

### Treasures in Elder Catalogues

In particular, the earlier mentioned Elder catalogues are a rich

<sup>10</sup> D.W. Akers, *United States Gold Coins: An Analysis of Auction Records*, 6 vols. (Englewood, 1975-1982); idem., *United States Gold Patterns: A Photographic Study of the Gold Patterns Struck at the United States Mint from 1836 to 1907* (Racine, 1975).

<sup>11</sup> C.W.A. Carlson, "Tracker: An Introduction to Pedigree Research in the Field of Rare American Coins," in *The American Numismatic Association Centennial Anthology*, ed. C.W.A. Carlson and M.J. Hodder, (Wolfeboro, 1991), pp. 349-364; Q.D. Bowers, *The American Numismatic Association Centennial History* (Wolfeboro, 1991).

hunting ground. Thomas Lindsay Elder put out his first auction catalogue in New York City *circa* 1903. Elder was a very lively person. He was a professional telegrapher who sent to the world in September 1901 the news of the death of President McKinley, who was fatally wounded by an assassin at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. But Elder was a coin person at heart. He started collecting at about ten or eleven and was interested in everything from coins to Indian arrowheads to tobacco tags. Later, in the early twentieth century, he started his cataloguing career. A creature of method and order, Elder was not. He didn't know anything about logical arrangement. He handled a number of famous collections, such as the Peter Mougey sale and in particular the William H. Woodin sale, but he also, as John Adams has delineated in Volume Two of his remarkable study, published 200 or so other catalogues plus many magazines.<sup>12</sup>

Trying to study Elder catalogues is a very daunting task. I spent a week at the ANA library looking through all of theirs, constituting the bulk of what was published. Beyond that, John Dannreuther, a highly competent researcher and fine friend, loaned me catalogues from Harry W. Bass's set, which he had bought at one of George Kolbe's auctions. Others were found elsewhere.

As I've mentioned, I found huge numbers of super rarities in the Elder catalogues. Coiled hair stellars, 1828 over 7 half eagles, large numbers of other very well known things that have never been recorded because I don't think any modern compiler of numismatic information has ever looked through these in minute detail (although John Adams gave a sketch of each). A curious aspect is that an Elder catalogue can say on the cover — and this is a hypothetical illustration — “Beautiful Collection of Gold Dollars,” but somewhere in the back of the catalogue, between two Hard Times tokens will be a gem 1861 dollar completely out of order and not with the main collection. Elder catalogues, more than any other catalogues that I know of, need to be gone through one by one and you can't miss a page. I probably spent at least a month doing this — just for gold coins.

### **Learning about Colonel Cummings**

Let me mention Barney Bluestone. I bought a set of this Syracuse dealer's catalogues from John Adams. I spent two weeks looking through the Bluestone catalogues, which yielded a lot of things. This is another immense repertoire that does not seem to have been studied by Breen.

Remy Bourne recently sent me a couple hundred pounds of weird and obscure catalogs,

<sup>12</sup> J. Adams, *United States Numismatic Literature*, Volume 2: *Twentieth Century Auction Catalogs* (Crestline, 1990).

some by rare coin dealers I had never heard of, and I am just going through them one by one by one. Every once in a while you find something like — again a hypothetical example — the Jones collection of early half eagles sold in Topeka, Kansas, in 1893, that I never heard of before.

The Col. Charles Cummings collection of gold Proof sets, sold by William Hesslein in June 1923, is an example of a generally unknown listing (although Hesslein, not in the mainstream, is better remembered than a lot of early dealers). Since “discovering” Cummings, I have found picture postcards, circa 1906, featuring his spacious lakeside estate, and have learned a lot else about him (one of his steam launches for pleasure rides was called the Rowena, and for music he had a Welte orchestrion in his house) — stuff for a future article, perhaps.

Here we are today in 2001 and I think that the research through old auction catalogs should continue and will yield a lot, especially if they are out of the mainstream. I don’t think you will find much in one of my catalogues or one of Stack’s catalogues or B. Max Mehl’s because they have been pretty thoroughly mined, but there are a heck of a lot of out of the way catalogues that will amply reward anyone with the luck to own or borrow copies and the patience to look through them.

### City Directories

Regarding books as a research

tool, my own personal interest is to go beyond numismatic titles. I like numismatic books, but there is not much new stuff to be found in them. Instead, I try to find original source material published decades ago when certain coins and currency were circulating. I have found that very good sources include city directories. However, city directories need to be understood. I probably can discuss city directories as well as almost anyone. Maybe John Ford can talk about them more precisely than I could, but I am not an amateur at it either.

Take as examples the directories that have been published for New York city. I have most of them through 1860 on microfiche, and many originals of later dates. The reliability of the information varies widely, depending on the compiler and publisher — and such change over a period of years. You might see that someone lived at — and I’m making this up as an illustration — 241 Broadway in 1837; that they are not listed at all in 1838; in 1839 they are found at 242 Broadway; after which they are not listed for two years.

You might assume that they might be moving around. The answer is that many New York city directories did not build on previous listings. Compilers sometimes started from scratch. A person living in a given building might say they were at 12 Wall Street one year, 10 Wall Street another year, and 1000 Wall Street sometime else.

I came across something interesting the other day, which I



don't know if it's been recorded among modern numismatic scholars. May 1 in New York City every year was called "Moving Day." In the 1820s and 1830s, many if not most apartments and transient places of occupancy had their leases expire on May 1. That way, everybody had to move at the same time, and as one place became empty someone else could move into it. They don't have that tradition anymore, but there's a big, long explanation of moving day in one of the directories.

This is interesting because if I find in a newspaper, a newspaper being a far more reliable source than a directory, that someone lived upstairs at 277 Broadway in March 1837 and at the rear of No. 2 White Street in March 1838, I can pretty much assume that they moved in May 1837. I try not to say that as a fact but it's a good possibility. A lot of little tidbits like that can be unearthed by poking through old directories. Although a given New York City directory can be quite unreliable, in the aggregate they are very useful. You can look up people like Edward Groh of the American Numismatic Society, or any of the numismatic societies' founders, and you will see just as I said, they move around and the numbers change. Sometimes the names are misspelled, but in the long run you can learn a lot.

In contrast, city of Detroit directories are quite reliable. You can almost print Detroit information from the Civil War as

fact, and so if you just know this, these are excellent and reliable sources, for example for studies on Civil War tokens or banks. The Cincinnati directories are also very good sources of information but Cincinnati and New York directories both do not list company names. If Pete Smith operated the Enterprise Cafe at 212 Fourth Street in Cincinnati, it would say, "Pete Smith, saloon keeper, 212 Fourth Street," but a token for which you seek information might say Enterprise Café with no address. Thus, you would have no way from a directory to associate Pete Smith with it. On the other hand, if you look at a Cincinnati newspaper, which I also collect, it would say Enterprise Cafe, 212 Fourth Street. Matching the type of business and the address, you can now put the two names together. If you match a city directory with a person and newspaper advertisements you can learn a lot.

### **The S.S. Central America Research**

Bob Evans and I gave a presentation at the ANA Numismatic Theatre in Atlanta in 2001 about the Central America. California gold has been a consuming research interest of mine since the 1950s, but this has been greatly accelerated during the past two years. Through the offices of Dwight Manley and the California Gold Marketing Group, an unlimited budget really was given to create a book on California gold ingots and gold coins. At one time we had a half

a dozen people in the field visiting the Huntington Library, the Bancroft Library, the New York Public Library, the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress to get information, and others working at my office. It was really exciting. The fun thing about this particular project is that it was paid for by the ship itself. Amazingly and ironically, the *S.S. Central America* is essentially subsidizing a book about itself!

Edgar H. Adams was the pre-eminent numismatic researcher in the United States circa 1905-1915, and is remembered today for his work on California gold coins and to a lesser extent for his work on patterns.<sup>13</sup> The pattern text was mainly done by William H. Woodin and Adams took the photographs. For his California gold book, Adams mainly looked at a newspaper called the *Alta California*, "alta" meaning "northern." It was published in San Francisco. I have it on microfilm and consider it to be a very good source.

But beyond that, we found much more. The Library of Congress in its infinite wisdom a number of years ago decided to throw out all of its issues of the *San Francisco Herald* and other Gold Rush era newspapers that were once held for copyright purposes. In a visit there a few years ago with the "chief deaccessioner," he said that it is

much easier to just dump these out, "because we don't have to put them up for bids and, anyway, we don't have the staff to do it."

About a year ago, I came across someone who had acquired all the San Francisco newspapers from the 1850s, and I made an arrangement to buy many of these. Actually, Dwight Manley bought them, and it ran the best part of \$100,000. Beyond the *Alta California*, there were perhaps a dozen newspapers produced during the Gold Rush period with lots of interesting information about gold coins and ingots. There were so many issues that when they arrived at my office, I could look through only a few before sending them all off to Dwight Manley in California. No doubt there are treasures of information therein just waiting to be tapped. In my perusal I came across many nuggets, but hardly all.

I also found out that completely untapped sources of California gold information are crime reports. If somebody in 1852 was robbed in a boarding house, and this happened regularly, the crime report would have given details — such as of a man being robbed of two Baldwin 1851 gold pieces, one \$50 slug, one Spanish so-and-so, and 32 cents worth of miscellaneous copper.

This book has been fun for me, because I've just never had an

<sup>13</sup>E. H. Adams, *Private Gold Coinage of California, 1849-1855* (New York, 1911-1912); E. H. Adams and W.H. Woodin, *United States Pattern, Trial and Experimental Pieces: Being a List of the Pattern, Trial and Experimental Pieces Which Have Been Issued by the United States Mint from 1792 up to the Present Time* (New York, 1913).

unlimited research budget to do anything with and, as I said, the *Central America* is financing its own history. I've tried to, as I often do, ignore common business sense and try to put as much into it as I can. Anyway, I think you will like the result.

### What Coins Tell Me

Beyond written and published historical material, in research there are the coins themselves. What can the coin tell me when I look at it? What can an assay ingot tell me? I think this is a relatively new area of research in which someone will look at and analyze a coin to determine what metal it was made out of. "You can see a lot by just looking," Yogi Berra said. Accordingly, by looking at a run of early silver dollars, you can determine whether somebody was a sloppy die maker or a precise craftsman.

In the *Gobrecht Journal* and in the *John Reich Journal*, there have been illustrations and new ideas of how stars were punched. Some seem to have gang punched two stars at a time or three at a time. Things such as the center scribe lines, lathe marks, and misplaced dates are facets being studied now, but which Walter Breen never got involved with in depth, if at all.

Another great area of research that is virtually untouched is the four digit logotype punch. In 1846, to take John McCloskey's recent study example, the Mint made up a four digit punch that read 1-8-4-6. Some punches had tall numbers, others had squat ones, and others were in

between. In the particular year of 1846, coin denominations included the half cent (only in proof format), the large copper cent, the half dime, the dime, the quarter, half dollar, and the dollar. Among gold coins, denominations of \$2.50, \$5 and \$10 were made. The aforementioned date punches were used across the denominations, in no particular arrangement, and no doubt it was fun for Dr. McCloskey to sort them out.

### Agassiz and Fish Eyes

Years ago I used to give a class at the ANA Summer Seminar called "All About Coins." That's how Dwight Manley decided to become a coin dealer. He was fourteen years old at the time. Now he is immensely successful, not only in numismatics, but as owner of the United Sports Agency, a management service with many star clients.

In my ANA class I told of Louis Agassiz, the professor of natural sciences. It is said that he gave his students in a zoology class a fish and he said, "I want you to write down all you can about the scales around the fish's eye. When you are done raise your hand."

Three minutes later all the hands were up.

"I want you take another *half hour* and write more."

His students started to see more: the scales were several different sizes and they might have overlapped in different directions, and there were other peculiarities that they did not see in their first three minutes' worth



of observations.

I did this with coins. I asked each student to look at the *Guide Book*, in which three pictures were given for 1794-dated copper cents. I said, "I want you to take twenty minutes and I want you to look at such things as the word LIBERTY, the pole, the date, the 1, the 7, the 9, the 4. I want you to look at Miss Liberty's face carefully. Are all three coins exactly the same?"

This was done, and a spirited discussion always took place afterward. Quite a few students said they had never looked at a coin closely before. I should mention that my friend Bill Fivaz, who has published much about die varieties, has not studied coin history in detail, but has done much great work in examining minute coin details — discovering many exciting things along the way.

I think "what can a coin tell me" offers many research oppor-

tunities. The Internet can help in the sharing of information, and computers can store it. Some have been using computers for a long time — Scott Rubin is an example. Others are new at it.

I think that today, numismatic research, in addition to the traditional numismatic book collecting, is an especially challenging area for NBS members.

I think that there are tremendous opportunities for everybody. There are enough specialties for everybody in this room to have one or a few and not overlap. My gosh, the world awaits a scholar devoted to just the catalogues of Thomas Elder!

We also have the wonderful element of camaraderie. There has never been an instance when somebody in this room, if asked a question, wouldn't help. I think we have good camaraderie, fellowship, lots of opportunity, a fascinating field and a nice journey ahead of us.

## Response to Fanning

By Pete Smith

I would like to respond to David Fanning's recent article on "Plagiarism or Cooperation?" (Spring 2002 issue of *The Asylum*) and his discussion of identical premium lists. I had the opportunity to review premium lists in Remy Bourne's collection as I wrote forwards for his books on fixed price lists. As Fanning suggested, I found premium lists "the kind of stuff which even most NBS-types would regard as being little more than curious junk with almost no research value."

I found that many premium lists copied sections, pages, or their entire text from other lists. Some premium lists had a blank space for the company name. Firms could print their name in that space or might use a rubber stamp. I suspect that a complete family tree would show many branches emerging from relatively little root stock.

Although Bourne's collection was extensive, he didn't have everything. There are probably many premium lists with imprints from small firms that are unrecorded in the references. Survival rates for premium lists are low since they were distributed to the general public rather than collectors.

Initially Fanning, Joel Orosz and I could find no record of Bogert and Durbin as a coin dealer. The explanation is simple. Bogert and Durbin was a Philadelphia stamp dealership

and publisher of the *Philatelic Monthly* journal. To find this bit of information, the library that took me 20 years to assemble proved useless, while five minutes on the Internet produced the information I needed.

In his footnote 3, Fanning mentions that "Leon Durbin was primarily a stamp dealer, not a coin dealer." This is not a problem. The premium list included coins and stamps and could be used by either dealer.

I don't believe the Bogert and Durbin list was printed from the same plates as the New York Coin and Stamp list. Photographic processes were frequently used to reproduce copy or illustrations from previous publications. Removing the running head would be easy with film but difficult on a plate.

A close examination of a photographic reproduction will frequently show fuzzy typography and extraneous marks or "dirt" on the pages. It is also possible to use opaque materials to cover pinholes in film and clean up the resulting image. Although it might be possible to identify a photographic copy by examining the lists, the minor differences don't show in the illustrations in *The Asylum*.

There is another mystery. Why did NYC&S Co. have their printing done in Meriden, Connecticut, while Bogert and Durbin had their printing done just three blocks from NYC&S Co.'s

location? Apparently shipping was not a problem with the NYC&S Co. lists shipped back to New York and the Bogert and Durbin lists shipped to Philadelphia.

I would suggest another scenario. Both lists may have been produced from the same original copy. It would be cheaper and more convenient to ship paper originals than to ship printing plates. I suspect, however, that the Bogert and Durbin list was photographically reproduced from the NYC&S Co. list.

What was the economic incentive to publish a premium list? Buying coins may not be the primary incentive. There is evidence that some firms made most of their profit from the sale

of the list. With this in mind, it is interesting that Bogert and Durbin removed the ten cent sale price from the cover.

I don't believe there was a parent subsidiary relationship between the two firms. I suspect they had a casual cooperation and non-competition agreement. The use of a common premium list assured they were buying at the same market levels. Either firm would have been happy to buy wholesale lots from the other.

Fanning's article is the most extensive study that I can recall for a premium list. Perhaps this will open the door for Fanning or someone else to do a more extensive study and to report the results in *The Asylum*.



## More on Identical Premium-Paid Lists

By David F. Fanning

At the end of my article "Plagiarism or Cooperation?: Two Identical Premium-Paid Lists of the Late Nineteenth Century," published in the Spring 2002 issue of *The Asylum*, I invited readers who might be able to shed light on the questions I raised to contact me for further discussion. I am very pleased to report that several people have been kind enough to lend their thoughts on the origins and motivations behind the publication of these premium paid lists.

Q. David Bowers suggested the possibility of the lists having been printed from a Linotype or Mergenthaler machine, with each line, including the running heads, being formed as a "slug," which then would be fitted into a frame. He noted that the running heads could have been ground away for anonymous reprinting, which could explain the presence of the partial *p* and the comma — they were simply missed by the person who did the grinding.

The botched dollar sign in the original New York Coin and Stamp Company catalogue, clearly reproduced in the Bogert and Durbin catalogue (as shown in Figures 2 and 3 of my original article), was one of the points which had led me to the tentative conclusion that the original catalogue was photographically reproduced for use by Bogert and

Durbin. Pete Smith, in his response in this issue, agrees that the text was probably reproduced photographically, though he questions the motives behind such reproduction.

In my previous article, I considered the possibility that Bogert and Durbin had reproduced the New York Coin and Stamp Company list with the latter firm's permission (Scenario 3), but decided against this notion as it seemed unlikely for the smaller firm to be affiliated with such a prestigious firm and not make mention of it. At the time, I was thinking of this in terms of the businesses being professional affiliates or partners.

Both Smith and Bowers have made me reconsider this issue in light of the fact that the practice of allowing others to use one's list as a template for their own has a documented history in U.S. numismatics, with Bowers mentioning that Lee Hewitt offered a premium-paid list for sale on the covers of which a company could have their name printed. This arrangement could be of benefit to the original publisher and compiler of the list through either a business deal under which the publishing firm received first refusal on any coins purchased as a result of the list or simply through the sale of the list to the other coin dealer. In other words, the businesses could have an agreement of sorts

without actually being formal partners or affiliates.

As far as determining the identities of Bogert and Durbin, Terry Stahurski located a Philip Bogert as being a consignor in the March 18, 1901 auction sale conducted by Ed. Frossard *frs*. He rightfully points out that the time period of the auction sale makes sense in relation to the presumed time period of the premium paid lists. I had originally suggested (on the advice of Joel Orosz) the possibility of Durbin being Leon Durbin, a stamp dealer of the time. It was Pete Smith, however, who finally determined that Bogert and Durbin were Philadelphia stamp dealers.

Their full names were Rudolphus R. Bogert (1842-1907) and Leonidas W. Durbin (1849-1887).<sup>1</sup> According to Cal Hahn, Durbin was a Philadelphia-based stamp dealer and publisher of the *Philatelic Monthly*, Bogart a New York stamp dealer. Bogert and Durbin were never actually partners except in name. On Durbin's death, his wife took

over the business, merging it with stamp dealer E.B. Hanes. On December 7, 1891, Bogert bought Durbin's share of the business, which then became Bogert and Durbin (though Hanes remained as president of the firm). Bogert retired in 1900. The business retained the Bogert and Durbin name until Bogert's death in 1907.

Bowers, Smith and Leonard Augsburger all suggested that sites of further research would include New York and Philadelphia city directories of the time period and the references of the New York Public Library. Augsburger also pointed out that an index exists for the *New York Times* for the time period — something I did not know. These are all great leads for future research and I hope to have the time to look into this further. At present, uncertainties remain regarding these two lists and their relation. While it no longer seems likely that the Bogert and Durbin list was compiled for fraudulent purposes, its publication remains unclear.

<sup>1</sup> "Intertwining of Philatelic and Social History," available on the Web site of the New York chapter of the U.S. Philatelic Classics Society <[www.nystamp.org](http://www.nystamp.org)>; Hahn spells Bogert's name "Bogart," but it seems apparent from the philatelic literature that "Bogert" is correct.

## Collecting Numismatic Literature in the 1960s

By David Hirt

During the early 1960s, I was immersed in coin collecting. Because I was single at the time and living at home, my expenses were not too high and almost all the money I made was spent on numismatics. The only numismatic book I owned at this time was the *Guide Book*, which I purchased each year. I was bidding on coins in Stack's sales as well as those of Hans Schulman and Abner Kreisberg.

I attended several of those sales in New York city, traveling by train from my home near Philadelphia. I remember that the Schulman sales were held at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel

At times, I would notice in the catalogues that the pedigree of previous famous owners of rare coins were given. Most of the rarest colonial coins seemed to have come from the Bushnell and Parmelee collections. I remember thinking "wouldn't it be neat to own the catalogues of these collections so I could check out all those rare coins."

Not long after this, I received the catalogue of Kreisberg's mail bid sale of June 1965. This sale, with over 5,000 lots, had 50 lots of numismatic books and catalogues. One of these was a bound volume of the Parmelee sale. I put in a bid and was successful. So now I had a start in numismatic literature.

In November 1965, Kreisberg

had another sale that had some really rare and desirable books and catalogues, although I did not realize this at the time. There was an almost complete run of large size Chapman sales with plates.

The highest price for these was the Stickney sale at \$235, while the Hunter sale brought \$155. Another rare Chapman sale catalogue offered was the Henderson sale with plates. It realized \$27. I bid \$30 on the Mickley sale which was estimated at \$35, but didn't get it. I was to pay much more for that sale many years later.

Then in November 1966, Hans Schulman had a sale devoted to numismatic literature. From this sale I obtained a volume of Scott's *Coin Collector's Journal*.

The interest in this literature that had been kindled in me burst into full flame in 1968 as I began bidding in earnest. In March, Kreisberg had a literature sale that had some really outstanding items.

I got quite a few nice works from this sale, but one item that I just missed haunts me to this day — an almost complete run of Ed Frossard's *Numisma*. I bid \$97.50 and it realized \$100.

The following month, C.E. Bullowa had a mail bid sale of literature. In this sale, I got a nice partial run of the *American Journal of Numismatics*. In June of



that year, Schulman had another literature sale in which I successfully bid on a number of items.

The year 1968 also saw my introduction to many years of bidding in Frank Katen's sales with my participation in the sale of Floyd B. Newell's library. This was a very large sale, having 3,325 lots. I got a good percentage of my bids.

Since then, my interest has continued unabated in numismatic literature. I have purchased very few coins since I sold most of my collection at auction in 1975 and 1976. Now, however, I am facing that bane of all book collectors — lack of shelf space — so I am trying to control myself. Will I be able to do this? Who knows?

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## Storer's Numismatic Roots

By Frederick N. Dyer

David Humphreys Storer, M.D. (1804-1891) was probably the source of interest in numismatics for his son, Horatio Robinson Storer, M.D. (1830-1922), whose specialty was medical medals,<sup>1</sup> and Horatio's son, Malcolm Storer, M.D. (1862-1935), whose numismatic interests were widespread and included naval medals.<sup>2</sup> At David Humphreys Storer's death, another son, Francis Humphreys Storer (1832-1914), was asked to provide information about his father:

Cambridge, June 27, [18]92

My Dear [Francis Humphreys] Storer,

Can you tell me at how early an age your father took special interest in Natural History? and how it came about that he was one of the original members of the B.S.N.H. (in 1830) and almost immediately its Recording Secretary? So far as I can discover his first interest was in Mollusca, a very natural interest from a boy born on the Maine coast. Any hints you can give me of the early period would be very interesting.

Yours very truly,  
Samuel H. Scudder

What follows is the letter Francis provided:

Boston, 28 June 1892

Dear Scudder,

My father entered Bowdoin College when he was not yet fourteen years old. There he came under the influence of A.P. Packard, for whom he retained through life a warm affection and admiration. At that time mineralogy interested him more particularly and he greatly enjoyed Packard's field excursions to mineral localities. He accumulated for himself quite a number of mineral specimens which he gave to me when I was appointed to the institute of technology, in 1865, and which did excellent service there as material for starting the earlier classes in blowpipe work.

His taste for natural objects was by no means confined to minerals. At a very early day, entomology engaged his attention not a little and he gave

1. Horatio Robinson Storer was the author of *Medicina in Nummis* (Boston, 1931), a 1,100 page treatise on medical medals, published posthumously by his son Malcolm. See C. Davis, *American Numismatic Literature: An Annotated Survey of Auction Sales, 1980-1991* (Lincoln, 1992), p. 174.

2. According to Davis, Malcolm Storer authored several works pertaining to numismatics, including: "Admiral Vernon Medals, 1739-1742" *Massachusetts Historical Society*, April 1919, pp. 187-276; *Numismatics of Massachusetts* (Cambridge, 1923); "Pine Tree Shillings and Other Colonial Money," *Old-Time New England* 20/2 (1929), pp. 65-86; and *Catalogue of the Malcolm Storer Collection of Naval Medals* (Annapolis, 1936).

popular lectures on the natural history of insects in the days when the custom of giving lyceum lectures first began.

He was interested in birds also, at one time, and he had a large collection of bird's eggs. It was through his example and interest that his young brother-in-law, T.M. Brewer, became a student of oology and ornithology. The taste for collecting extended even to coins. At one time (as he told me) he was in league with all the toll-gatherers on the Boston bridges and they kept for him any odd pieces of money which came to their hands. This coin interest has been handed down to some of his descendants. His son, H.R.S., is today greatly interested in numismatics, and his grandson, John H.S., is curator of coins belonging to Harvard college. I smile daily to see a still younger grandson, Malcolm S., poring over the arrangement of coin collections even as you have done over the remains of shale-invested insects. The coin collecting overlapped and blended with the natural history interests in a curious way — even as archaeology sometimes fuses in with geology — in that he forgathered with the keepers of sailor's boarding houses for the sake of getting specimens of coins as well as of shells and fishes which their clients had brought home.

I doubt if his interest in conchology came in so early as that for minerals and insects

but it was long retained. It was the immediate precursor of his study of fishes. I can myself well remember the time that he was still collecting shells, of which he had accumulated no inconsiderable number. My sisters have just now sent them to Bowdoin College.

I have forgotten just what my father's relations were to the question of his going out as naturalist on the exploring expedition which finally sailed under Capt. Wilkes, but my impression is that the fact of his having only recently been married made him refuse to allow his friends to urge his appointment.

To my mind, it is evident that in his early manhood my father was a good "all around" naturalist, according to the custom — and to the lights and limitation — of that time in this locality. Else he never could have handled the fishes and reptiles as he did when called upon, in 1837, to write the state report; i.e., at a time when he was 33 years old and in active medical practice. Of course, the study of the fishes was the culmination to which the other matters had led up.

It was a great pleasure to my father to have Agassiz call upon him on his arrival in Boston with the remark "my first visit was necessarily to Mr. Lowell who helped to call me hither, but I have come to you directly from Mr. Lowell's house." During Agassiz' residence in Boston and East Boston, hardly a day passed



but someone of the "military family" — Agassiz, Desor, Pourtales, Girard, etc. — was to be found in my father's house. They dined and tead with us habitually, and we children grew up among them on as familiar terms as if they had been our own relations. All this was broken up by the row with Desor in which my father acted as Desor's friend, though he finally acquiesced in the verdict of "not proven."

Does not this depiction go to show how and why it was that

my father had much to do with the inception of the natural history society?

Truly yours,  
F.H. Storer

The letter is now at the Massachusetts Historical Society. I deposited it there two years ago on behalf of Horatio Storer's great-grandchildren, who loaned me a huge number of manuscripts that I used to write *Champion of Women and the Unborn: Horatio Robinson Storer, M.D.* (Canton, 1999).

## Book Review

By David F. Fanning

### *The Coins of Pontius Pilate*

By Jean-Philippe Fontanille and Sheldon Lee Gosline

Marco Polo Monographs 4

Softcover US \$26.00; hardcover US \$34.50

This monograph is a highly readable account of the three years' worth of coinage produced under the reign of the most infamous of the Judean prefects, Pontius Pilate (in office 26-36 C.E.; produced coins 29-31 C.E.). The text manages to balance historical discussion with an examination of the numismatic output of Pilate by motif and die variety. The authors' primary accomplishment is in writing a book which can be read by the novice, while being of use to the most advanced specialist in the area.

This is the first published work devoted in its entirety to Pilate's coinage. While the coins are included in the general references on Roman numismatics, Fontanille and Gosline take the topic to another level by examining the coinage — consisting of the fairly crude, rather small bronze prutot (singular prutah) — in a detail heretofore unheard of for this particular issue.

One of the primary successes of the book is in providing the historical context in which the Pilate coins were struck. Far from treating the coins as objects and artifacts only, the authors seem very much aware of the role coins play in the life of everyday people. They approach the sub-

ject both from the perspective of the twenty-first century researcher and of the inhabitant of Judea in the early first century. Historical information is provided in such a way as to satisfy the scholar who may wish to pursue further study as well as the more casual reader looking for a general overview.

The sections of the book concerned with describing in detail the variations to be found on Pilate's coins are well organized and methodical. Sections dealing with metallurgy and the minting process augment the descriptions of coins by die variety in a way which makes pleasurable reading out of what could have been a dry-as-dust catalogue.

The authors' analysis of the primary motifs on the Pilate coins — particularly their analysis of the simpulum and lituus devices — is downright fascinating and gives the reader further insight into an extraordinary part of the world during an extraordinary time.

The text is presented first in English, then in French. I was puzzled, however, by the notice preceding the French text warning that it was not an identical translation of the English. No further information is given,

though differences seem to be minimal.

The main body of the text is followed by three appendices: one concerning the current values and availability of the coins; one on the possible inclusion of images of the coins on the Shroud of Turin (a cloth bearing the likeness of a crucified man, which some believe to be the burial shroud of Christ); and a useful classification table for delineating die varieties. While the second appendix is fairly lengthy, I'll leave any review of its merits to those more interested in matters theological. The other two appendices serve their purpose well, with the classification scheme developed by the authors being of particular value. A bibliography follows.

While the book's text does a good job of providing an overview of its subject as well as a detailed analysis of the individual coins, there are some aspects of the book itself which could use improvement. The softcover volume is very poorly bound, with the covers being of a particularly thin glossy card stock which doesn't hold up to the rigors of a simple reading, much less repeat reference. Anyone considering a purchase is advised to invest in the hardcover

(though I have not seen it and cannot vouch for its binding).

The illustrations used throughout are of varying quality, with full color, high resolution plates included towards the front of the book and lower resolution black and white illustrations throughout the text. The black and white illustrations are useful primarily in giving the reader an idea of to which color illustration to refer – otherwise, they serve little purpose, being of too low a resolution to be especially useful. For some reason, these illustrations are not included throughout the French text.

In the introduction to the volume, Fontanille and Gosline note that in order to compose their text, they found it necessary to combine historical, archaeological and religious approaches to the study of Pilate's numismatic output: "Only by these diverse approaches can we begin to understand the peculiar relationship between numismatic, historical, geographic and religious contexts as expressed by this fascinating body of artifacts." Fontanille and Gosline have done a good job in using all of these approaches in order to develop a highly interesting study.



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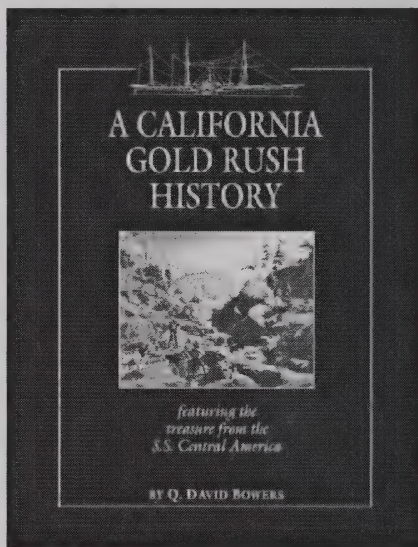
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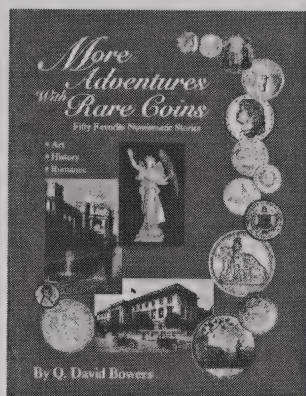
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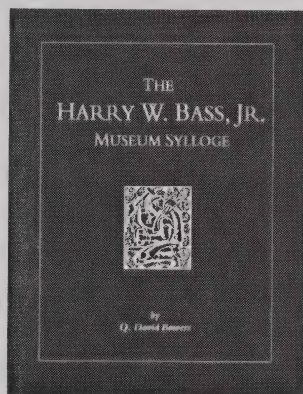


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Manville, H. *Tokens of the Industrial Revolution. Foreign Silver Coins Countermarked for Use in Great Britain, c. 1787-1828*. A special publication of the British Numismatic Society. A handsome hardcover volume, 307 pages plus 55 plates, many photos also in text. Extensive historical notes. Lists all known examples of this series. \$75.

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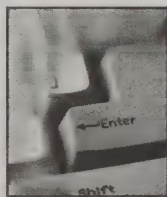
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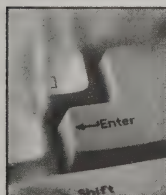
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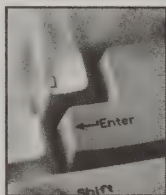
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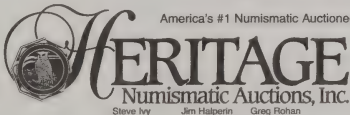
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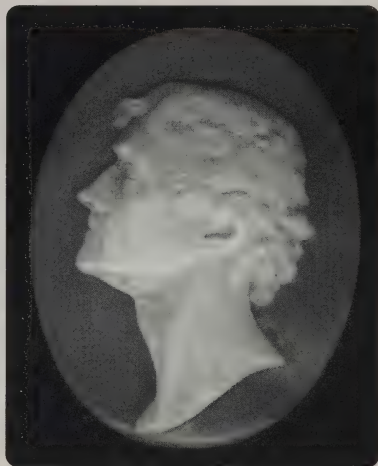
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## President's Message

By Pete Smith

Each year we have the opportunity to meet other NBS members at the annual American Numismatic Association convention. Six of our nine officers and Board members were present at the New York City show. We enjoyed meeting many people but were sorry that only a small percentage of our membership could attend.

According to Secretary-Treasurer David Sklow, we operated at a slight deficit this past year. We made up the difference with our fundraising auction, which brought in \$298. Thanks go to George Kolbe and Wayne Homren, who donated items for the sale. Also, thanks to our auctioneer, Brad Karoleff, who conducted the sale.

### NBS SYMPOSIUM

The Society sponsored a symposium at the convention. We were joined by Wendell Wolka, Fred Schwan and Joe Boling who discussed their use of literature and other resources as they researched their specialties. We thank them for their participation.

### CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

The proposed constitutional amendment to allow the Board to award honorary life memberships passed by a wide margin. A review of past records confirmed that NBS co-founder George Kolbe is currently our only honorary life member.

### CONTRIBUTION TO ANA

On behalf of the NBS, David Sklow presented a \$1,000 check to ANA Executive Director Ed Rochette and ANA Librarian Nancy Green as a contribution to the rare book room. This amount was pledged last year

based on our fundraising efforts and financial position at the time.

Rochette had asked the NBS to assist in raising funds for remodeling efforts at the ANA headquarters in Colorado Springs. If you plan to make a financial contribution to the ANA, consider making it in the name of the NBS to support the rare book room.

### EXHIBITS AT ANA

Although there was only one exhibit in the numismatic literature class, three first place exhibits showed literature as an essential part of the displays.

Jim Neiswinter took first place in the Numismatic Literature classification with "The First Photographic Plate in American Numismatics and the Cents of 1793." He showed several early published studies of the cents of 1793 that lead up to publication of Joseph Levick's photographic plate published in the *American Journal of Numismatics* for April 1869. He also displayed the 1793 Sheldon-15 cent that appeared on the plate.

Gerry Kochel took first place in the United States Coins classification with "A Simulation of the Rarities in the Louis Helfenstine Sale." The exhibit showed the poster made from the cover photograph for Lester Merkin's sale of the Helfenstein collection (August 14, 1964), so it was inspired by a piece of numismatic literature. He used cents from his own collection in the same layout as the photograph.

Kenneth Hill took first place in the U.S. Gold Coins classification with "United States Gold 12 Piece Type Set with Die Varieties." The exhibit was illustrated with several

of the standard references on gold coin varieties.

Thanks go to Eric Holcomb, who took pictures of the literature exhibit again this year. The exhibit can be seen on the NBS Web site <[www.coinbooks.org](http://www.coinbooks.org)> along with other past winners.

#### UPCOMING ELECTION

An election for the officers and Board of the NBS will take place in 2003. According to the NBS Constitution, nominations will be accepted during the first quarter of next year. An election will occur during the second quarter.

Tom Sheehan has agreed to serve as leader of the nominations committee. If you would like to run for the NBS Board or nominate someone, please contact Tom.

#### FUTURE ANA CONVENTIONS

Howard Daniel III suggested that the NBS could share his club table at future ANA conventions. Although this did not get on the agenda for discussion by the Board, everyone

that I talked with likes the idea. We will need to provide promotional literature and membership forms.

Again this year our NBS meetings conflicted with other events and two of us had to leave in the middle of the general meeting because of other conflicts. If we move our meetings to other times, we will probably conflict with something else. Let your Board members know when you would like to have meetings at future conventions.

#### 25TH ANNIVERSARY PLANS

The 25th anniversary of the founding of the Society will occur in 2004. We are looking at events to commemorate this occasion. We are planning a special issue of *The Asylum* to be published before the 2004 ANA convention in Pittsburgh. We will be soliciting articles from noted literature scholars, and possibly reprinting important articles from past issues. Do you have a favorite article? Send any suggestions to E. Tomlinson Fort or David Fanning.

## Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

Some years back, an article was printed in *The Asylum* referring to the existence of a book by Kamal Ahwash on Liberty seated half dimes (Ahwash is noted for his 1977 *Encyclopedia of Liberty Seated Dimes 1837-1891*). This article, by Robert Zavos (*The Asylum*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (1990), pp. 20-21), is entitled "The Rarest Numismatic Title" and refers to an apparently successful bid at a Kolbe auction for the half dime book.

Having indexed this article for *The Asylum*, I remembered it when a request was made by Steve Crain in *The E-Sylum* for information on Valentine or his book on half dimes.

I mentioned this to Steve, who seemed baffled by it, knowing that Ahwash had begun work on such a text, but he was certain Ahwash had not finished it before his untimely death. The uncertainty was bothersome, so I finally asked George Kolbe if he had any recollection of the situation.

He did! The following is the note I received promptly back from George:

Dear Bill,

Some years ago, an Ahwash book on Liberty Seated dimes was mis-described in one of my auction catalogues as being on half dimes. When this was called to

my attention, as a joke I sawed a copy of the book in half to prove to the correspondent that there was indeed an Ahwash book on the topic. Silly, but there it is!

Best, George

I thanked George and requested permission to quote his letter in print. He came back with the following:

Bill,

I just re-read *The Asylum* article. You should do so too. You will see why you were misled and it refreshed my memory. I believe the article caused me to drag out the circular saw and get to work! Mr. Zavos got his specimen and the other one (half?) went eventually to David Block with the request that it be sold to enrich the NBS treasury, but I do not believe that David ever did anything about it. Perhaps one day this indeed "scarce book" will come to light and be sold at auction, with a half page description of course. Fire (i.e., quote) at will!

Best, George

I consider those responses as authoritative as could be imagined: Kamal Ahwash's *Encyclopedia of Liberty Seated Half Dimes* does not exist!

William Malkmus



## Seven Steps to Protect Your Library Investment

By Doug Andrews<sup>1</sup>

Someone recently asked me, "My homeowner's insurance won't adequately cover my numismatic library for fire and theft. What should I do?" This gentleman had just discovered, fortunately before his book collection was damaged or destroyed, that it can be a challenge to protect. However, with a little preparation and the following seven-step plan, you can help avoid a serious loss to your library.

### STEP ONE:

#### Understanding the risks

As book collectors, the key to safeguarding our libraries depends on understanding how the risk of damage or loss to our books differs from that to other property. The person whose question inspired this article thought, like many of us, that he should protect his library against fire and theft. While a devastating fire could destroy your library — and your home or other book storage location — or you could lose a couple books to a thief, usually the greatest risk by far to our libraries is water damage. House fires are relatively rare and are less frequent than they were even a generation ago, thanks to education, safer heating and cooking appliances, and stricter code enforcement. When fires do occur, the severity of damage tends to be significant, however, due not only to flames, but also to smoke, heat and the water or chemicals used to extinguish the fire.

Another risk of severe damage is from wind storms, including torna-

does, typhoons and hurricanes. If you live in "tornado alley" or in a coastal area, chances are that you tend to look at precautions for your books in the context of your overall disaster plan.

The next general type of risk is that which, while more frequent in occurrence, tends to result in little damage to libraries. In this category are losses due to burglaries, thefts, riot and vandalism. Books, even rare books, are not major targets of burglars, except in isolated cases where the culprit has intimate knowledge of your collection in advance. Otherwise, thieves usually ignore books because they are heavy, more difficult to conceal and dispose of, and are not a quick source of cash, unlike camcorders, jewelry, televisions and coins. Damage to books from riot and vandalism is also fairly rare and, again, tends to be looked at in conjunction with precautions against loss of other property, which is a sensible approach.

In summary, the frequency and severity of losses involving library property are unique, and books, while much more susceptible to certain kinds of damage (such as from water), often escape thefts and vandalism.

### STEP TWO:

#### Reducing the Risks — Water

Water damage can be caused by a number of different phenomena including: burst piping; leakage from a heating appliance, dishwasher or waterbed; sewer backup; roof or

<sup>1</sup> Doug Andrews has a degree in social sciences from McMaster University, holds a diploma in risk management, and is a Certified Fraud Examiner. He has been an independent insurance adjuster and risk management consultant for 28 years, practicing in both the United States and Canada.

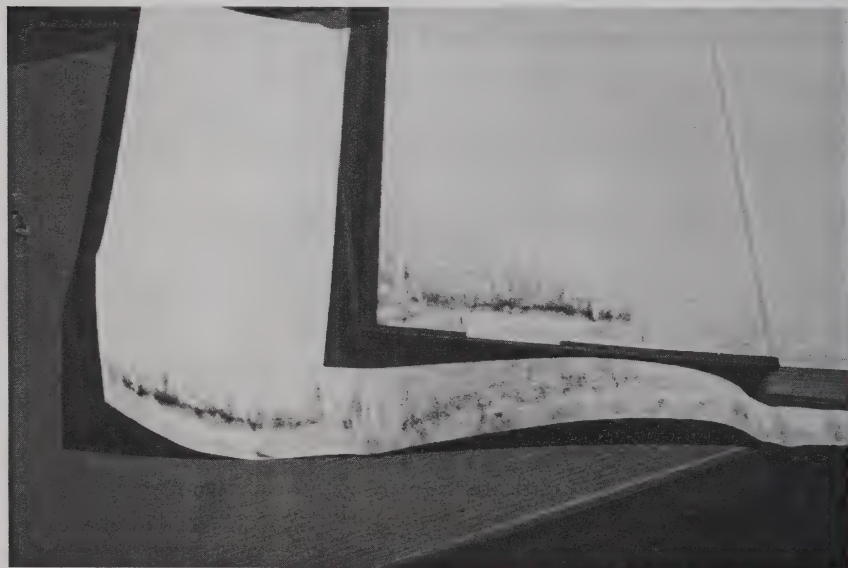
window leakage; and exposure to other perils such as wind storms, wave damage, flood or firefighting efforts (Figure 1). Try to avoid shelving or storing books in your garage or basement. Both tend to be damp and often experience dramatic swings in humidity. Good ventilation and air exchange also help to ensure favorable book storage conditions.

Locating your library above ground level is a sound practice, whenever possible. Lowest areas always fill with water first, whether due to plumbing rupture, sewer backup or flooding. Are your pipes prone to leaks, or do you often hear loud "water hammer" noises in your hot water radiators or pipes? Either condition may be an early warning sign of potential danger to your library and should be investigated by a licensed plumber.

There are a number of relatively inexpensive steps a homeowner can take to help avoid damage due to

sewer backup. Water seeks the path of least resistance to escape through residential drains. If you have a basement, check valves can be installed in floor drains and shut-off valves placed in plumbing fixtures to lessen the chances of backup. Home improvement stores or plumbers often can recommend additional steps that will make your basement a safer environment. A few dollars spent today on these preventative measures can save you literally thousands, and many headaches, from a sewer backup.

Apartment and high-rise condominium dwellers also can take precautions against water damage. Try to locate your library away from outside walls. Particularly in northern areas of the country, hot water radiators are usually found along exterior walls, exposing your books to a greater threat of water exposure from a sudden leak in either your apartment or from your upstairs neighbors. Similarly, apartment stor-



**Figure 1:** While restoration of books suffering immersion damage is possible, in this instance their value as collectibles is almost certainly destroyed.

age lockers are frequently located in basements or with boilers or heat distribution systems nearby.

### **STEP THREE:**

#### **Reducing the Risks — Fire and Other Perils**

Campaigns by local fire departments, television advertising and tips placed everywhere from your telephone directory to the enclosures with your property tax bill have created greater public awareness of fire safety and fire prevention than ever before. Accordingly, we will not dwell on fire safety here at any length, except to caution against having your library itself contribute to a hazard. A quick check to ensure that books and other library materials do not block heating vents or cold air returns will help avoid furnace overheating. Books and storage cartons also should not block doorways, halls or other essential fire escape routes.

If you are concerned about theft of your rare books, the same precaution applies to your library as to anything else you collect: be careful about inadvertently "advertising" what you own. This includes open use of your home address or other identifying information in publications, Web sites and ads, discussion of what prized books are in your collection with unfamiliar people and the use of indiscrete locations for delivery of books that may attract unwanted attention.

### **STEP FOUR:**

#### **Planning and Prevention**

There are four steps that every book collector should take today to protect their library from loss.

1. Install an alarm. Like most Americans, your prevention plan probably includes some type of battery-powered smoke alarm, or possibly a centrally monitored home burglary alarm. Both are

excellent and may save your loved ones' lives as well as your books. Today, a variety of other monitoring systems are available in many urban areas, including fire and water detectors, and these may be a worthwhile investment if the rarity or value of your collection justifies it.

2. Keep a running inventory of what you own and keep it off site. Whether you use a loose-leaf binder or a sophisticated database management system, there is no substitute for an accurate and detailed list of your holdings (include receipts), and it is invaluable if you suffer a loss.

3. Have a plan for emergency removal and temporary storage of your library to avoid a pending disaster such as flood, hurricane or forest fire.

4. Conduct a periodic review of the first three steps listed here and keep your preparations up to date.

### **STEP FIVE:**

#### **Insurance**

Insurance was placed toward the end of this discussion because it is probably the most common — and least understood — method of risk management available to book collection owners and librarians. Moreover, if we were to confine ourselves to an examination of insurance only, due attention to the many other forms of loss prevention and reduction looked at here would be placed on the back shelf farthest from the door.

Insurance should be regarded as one of many techniques to avoid loss, rather than the only one. Going back to the question that opened this article, homeowners' and tenants' insurance alone have serious limitations as means of protecting your book collection. Some policies will restrict insurance limits



on rare books to a few hundred dollars, while others may not provide any coverage at all. The solution often is to add a scheduled articles endorsement or rider to your policy. Many insurers offer them and give library owners the flexibility to select coverage limits appropriate to their personal needs and individually schedule books, catalogues, auction records and other items of interest.

It is important to insure your library property to its full value, to avoid any penalty in the event of loss. This applies to your house, personal effects and business as well. Discounts may be available if the premises holding your books are equipped with an alarm system.

Two additional points need to be addressed respecting coverage limits. First, values fluctuate, and it is necessary to monitor and update your coverage amounts regularly, taking into account the following factors: significant acquisitions or disposals of library property; changes in market demand or shifts in taste; and recent auction sale results, especially respecting rarities that are offered infrequently. Second, book and other paper restoration costs can be considerable. As technology has developed in this specialized field, the fees for successful restorative techniques have shot upward. The value of rare or unique books can be significant, and in these instances the cost of restoration is frequently worthwhile. This fact often is overlooked in purchasing insurance.

Coverage may be offered on either an all risks or named perils basis. The former, as the name implies, covers you and your library property for all risks of physical loss or damage subject to stated exclusions. Named perils policies are more restrictive and generally cheaper, but only cover you for specified causes of loss. Minimum coverage

should include water escape, sewer backup, fire and wind storm protection.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program in some areas, and it may be available from private insurance companies in other areas. As with the other suggestions here, you should discuss this with your insurance broker or agent locally and, above all, ask as many questions as needed to satisfy yourself that you are receiving the coverage you require. If you are purchasing flood insurance, verify whether it will extend to your collection.

#### **STEP SIX: Disaster Response**

The consequences of a major catastrophe can be overwhelming. But the steps taken immediately thereafter invariably will dictate how effectively and quickly you can recover. This is particularly true respecting water exposure, where the damage continues until your library holdings are removed from the damp environment and restoration is commenced.

The first hours after water damage occurs are critical. Calamity may strike at night or on a holiday, when it is more difficult to reach your insurer fast, and the steps you, the owner, take are vitally important. In addition to cutting off the source of water, if that is practical, books and other items commonly held in a library should be removed from the environment where they were damaged. Water from any external source may be contaminated and the books should be relocated as soon as possible to a dryer location where fresh air can circulate around them freely. The emphasis here is on speed. Stagnant water and air are ideal breeding grounds for mold and

mildew, so removal is the critical first step to restoration of your out of print or one of a kind books (Figure 2).

In addition to mold and possible contamination from sewage and "gray water," there is the potential for proximity damage, meaning damage to books and catalogues from being close enough to the water source for moisture and high humidity exposure to take place without the items actually being in contact with the water. That is why removal from the affected area as soon as safety permits is crucial.

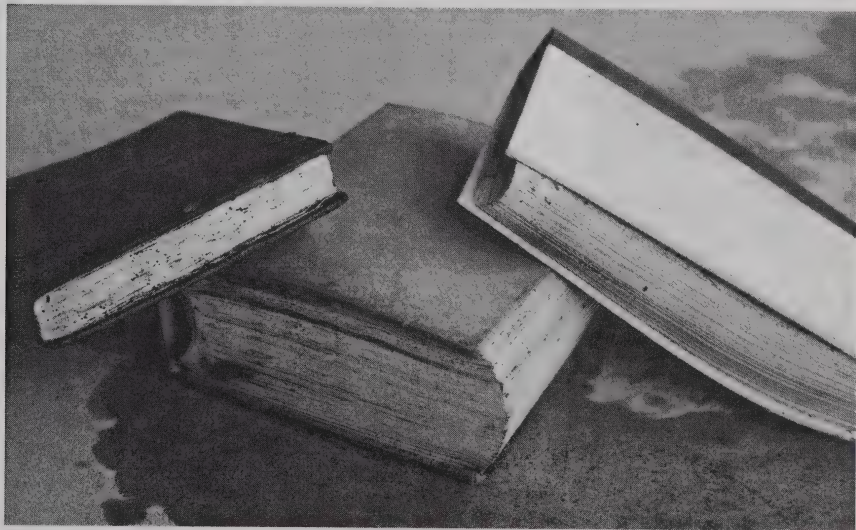
#### **STEP SEVEN: Making a Claim**

If you have insurance, contact your broker or company representative as soon as possible, keeping in mind that it may take longer for them to reach you following an area-wide disaster. Don't throw anything away until after the adjuster has inspected it. It is a good idea to separate damaged and undamaged

books promptly, and keep a list of each. Hopefully you have kept an inventory of what you have, as at a time like this, it will be invaluable.

The quicker you produce your inventory and any available purchase records, appraisals or photographs, the sooner you can expect to be able to move your claim toward a successful conclusion. Appraisals from a recognized authority on numismatic books and related references are especially useful in accurately establishing the value of your collection for claim purposes. Verify the limitation periods applicable to your claim under your state's Insurance Act. These vary according to the jurisdiction, but after a fixed time — typically twelve months — you can no longer receive a claim payment.

Having a better understanding of the risks you face as the owner of a numismatic library will enhance your enjoyment and pride of owning your cherished or rare library holdings for many years to come.



**Figure 2:** Mold can be caused by flooding, sewer backup or plumbing leakage. These books were damaged simply by storing them on a bare concrete floor.

## Genealogical Methods in Numismatic Research

by Leonard Augsburger

As a longtime amateur genealogist, I have become familiar with various search tools which can be used in numismatic research as well. For studies in American numismatics, biographical information is often sought on collectors, dealers, minters and many other individuals with stronger or lesser ties to the subject at hand. This can often require a bit of detective work. I have found the following tools to be quite helpful in this regard.

### The Social Security Death Index

This is the single best and easiest to use source of genealogical information in this country. This index includes anyone who has ever registered for Social Security and has since died. It is available for free at the commercial Web site Ancestry.com at <[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)>. With this index, you can find the social security number and death date for a given individual, provided you can supply enough information to specifically identify the individual. With millions of entries, common names will result in multiple matches. However, if you can supply a birth or death date to begin with, as well as a place of death, chances are good you can narrow the search enough to find who you are looking for. For uncommon surnames, the chances of success are even greater. Once you have a Social Security number, you can write to the Social Security Administration and, for a fee (currently \$29), they will supply you with a copy of the original application for a Social Security number. This is where you can find some really good information. The application will contain the father's name and mother's maiden name, date and place of birth, and even the signature of the applicant. With this information, you can now dig further.

### Obituaries

Once you have a death date for an individual, you are ready to search for an obituary in an area newspaper. Most area libraries with access to the local papers on microfilm will do this for a minimum fee or even for free. You can find area libraries by using an Internet directory such as Switchboard.com. Be sure to check over a several day period. A newspaper might have a terse mention of the death one day, followed up by more detailed information several days later. For rich biographical information about a person (beyond the names/dates/places info), this will generally be the best source of data.

### State Vital Records

These are a mish-mosh of information as all states treat vital records according to their own needs. Some states restrict records to next-of-kin, which basically means that certain records will rot in warehouses forever because the state has deemed that no one is "closely related" enough to the individual in question in order to access the files and everyone who was qualified is now dead. Other states are far more reasonable, opening up files after a certain amount of time (say, 50 or 100 years). If you are lucky, you can find birth, marriage, death and will documents. Because regulations differ and change, it is best to visit a Web site such as Vitalrec.com which specializes in this sort of thing — there you will find information on a state by state basis on how to access these records. Most records can be ordered for a few dollars each. The more information you can supply on what you are looking for, the greater your chances for success. Some states have better indexes than others and can search over a several



year period quickly. Others may need exact dates to locate a vital record.

### Internet Directories

If an individual has died recently, Internet directories such as Switchboard.com can provide a list of people with the same surname who live in the same area as the decedent. This is a good way to track down any living relatives. If you wish to be less intrusive, use Bigfoot.com or your favorite email address repository to generate a list of matches to the surname in question — you can then send a mass email to this list, as opposed to contacting people through snail mail or via telephone.

### Census Records

These are generally difficult to use but can provide very helpful information, such as the names and ages of everyone in the family, occupations, ethnic background, etc. The commercial site Ancestry.com now has many census images on file which can be viewed directly over the Web (do not try this over dial-up connections, as it can be quite slow). It will be very helpful to get a good detailed map of the area you are looking at as most records are arranged geographically. For instance, in a city, the census taker went up and down a block writing family names down. These streets were joined with others to form "enumeration districts" (typically a few square blocks in size), and it is here where you need to have a good geographical reference to the area in question as the enumeration districts will be defined arbitrarily. For a large city, there will be hundreds of enumeration districts. Note: the 1890 census was largely destroyed by fire and no longer exists. Also, the 1930 census was just released (these records are sealed for 72 years by law).

### Newspaper Indexes

The amount of numismatic information remaining to be mined from the vast records of the American press is considerable. Getting at it,

however, is no small feat! For starters, I am recommending the *New York Times* index, which is available at major libraries. This archive goes back over 100 years and almost certainly contains biographical information on any collectors and dealers who were otherwise prominent in society, particular those who lived in the New York area. Other newspapers have indexes as well, though these are by no means ubiquitous. Ask at area libraries for these. I have found that pointed questions can be necessary as librarians are sometimes reluctant to share resources which may require handholding. A recent trip to Baltimore found newspaper indexes available only in an unmarked cabinet and only by asking. When I looked at them, I understood why — they are by no means easy to use — but they are invaluable just the same.

### "Cyberstalking"

This refers to the practice of blindly typing an individual's name into a search engine (such as Google.com or Altavista.com) and seeing what comes up. Sometimes the information is useful, sometimes it is worthless. If nothing else, you may find other researchers asking the same questions as yourself. But you never know what you might find until you look!

### City Directories

One of Dave Bowers's favorite search methods. These are available usually only in the libraries of the city in question. A letter to the library with a detailed explanation of what you are looking for will usually get a quick response. In it you will typically find the address and occupation of the person in question, plus names of other household residents. Many city directories also have a "reverse" listing showing business and individuals by street — this is quite helpful for finding information about people who lived nearby the individual in question.

## What People Will Put on eBay

By Stephen B. Pradier

In late July 2001 I was the high bidder on a book entitled "Coins & Medals" which had been listed on the internet auction site eBay. The individual listing the book included a very fuzzy digital picture and a somewhat clearer image of the first page of the book and referenced it in the auction text. The listing went on only to mention that it contained *The Groux Collection, Now the property of a lady in Washington to be sold at Auction*, the back cover was missing and the spine was becoming detached.

I was familiar with the Groux Collection from George Kolbe's Sales Catalogue listings.

The book did not seem to be too bad a copy, and the minimum bid was very low.

Once I received the book I was surprised to find that it not only contained the catalogue of the Groux Collection, but also several other catalogues as well. Bound with only the semi-attached front cover and loose spine lettered: A Catalogue of Coins & Medals. The boards of the volume were well-worn quarter leather and marbled paper with similarly worn leather corners.

The book had the stamp of Alfred University Library in Alfred, New York.

I did a little research via the Internet and was surprised to find out some very interesting facts.

Alfred University (and the village where it is located) is named after King Alfred the Great (871-899), the ninth-century ruler of the kingdom of Wessex, which was located in what is now southern England.<sup>1</sup> The king was a distinguished leader, writer and thinker. In 1877, a statue of Alfred was unveiled in Winchester, England. The inscription on the statue summarizes the legacy of this complex, pivotal figure:

"Alfred found learning dead, and he restored it. Education neglected, and he revived it. The laws powerless, and he gave them force. The Church debased, and he raised it. The land ravaged by a fearful enemy, from which he delivered it. Alfred's name will live as long as mankind shall respect the past."<sup>2</sup>

The University's inception dates are as follows:

- 1836 — Select School founded.
- 1843 — Alfred Academy established.
- 1857 — Alfred University chartered.

In the mid-nineteenth century, when Alfred University was young, the library was located in a small room under the belfry of the chapel

<sup>1</sup> Two modern biographies are now available: A.P. Smyth, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford, 1995) and R. Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (Harlow, 1998). A good collection of translations of sources, including the king's own literary efforts, along with extensive commentaries, may be found in S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, *Alfred the Great* (Harmondsworth, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> One interesting mistake on the Alfred monument in Winchester (wrongly believed to be his "capital" in the nineteenth century) is that it lists his death date as AD 901. This common Victorian error was pointed out by W.H. Stevenson, "The Date of King Alfred's Death," *English Historical Review* 13 (1898), pp. 71-77. The author has not been to the campus of Alfred University and does not know if similar inscription errors occur there.

(Alumni Hall). It was later transferred to a small room on the first floor of the building. It was open only twice a week for fifteen minutes at a time. The number of books charged out in a given school year was less than one hundred volumes.

The library was enlarged in 1887 and moved to the second floor of Kenyon Hall, which was located where the Powell Campus Center now stands. It was open for two hours daily during the school year. The number of volumes totaled 8,310. The books were catalogued according to the Dewey Decimal System. Interestingly, Melvil Dewey was an AU student in 1870, and later it was he who convinced Andrew Carnegie that AU needed a new library.

After much discussion and many pleas from President Boothe C. Davis, Mr. Carnegie agreed to fund a library for AU. The Carnegie Library building was built in 1912 and dedicated in 1913. By 1933, it boasted a collection of almost 50,000 books and periodicals. This number continued to grow, and by World War II books and magazines were being stored all over campus due to lack of space in the Carnegie Library. Microfilm and other modern innovations were introduced, including sound recordings (LPs).

The *Catalogue of Coins and Medals* was catalogued as "Class 737," "Book C28." This book may have very well been one of the early volumes catalogued by Dewey himself.

The contents of the *Catalogue of Coins and Medals* consisted of nine different complete auction catalogues.

All were uniformly trimmed to fit the bound volume with the original covers removed.

Some of the catalogues have notations and prices penciled in and are so noted in the listing of its contents.

Listed here are the catalogues bound in:

1. *Catalogue Of The Entire Cabinet Of Antique Medieval And Modern Coins, Medals and Jetons. For many years known and celebrated as the Groux Collection. Now the property of a lady in Washington to be sold by auction without reserve, at the Clinton Hall Sales Rooms on the afternoon of Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, April 7th, 8th and 9th, 1874 commencing at 4 o'clock. The Messrs. Leavitt, Auctioneers.*

Catalogued by William H. Strobbridge. 57 pp., 1173 lots. With pencilled notations and signature of H. G. Sampson.

2. *Catalogue Of A Valuable Collection of Coins and Medals Late The Property Of Mr. James Parker, Deceased, And Other Collectors to be sold at auction by Messrs. Bangs, Merwin & Co., 656 Broadway, New York, On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 55th, 6th, 7th, and 8th May 1874.*

Catalogued by Edward Cogan. 94 pp., 2073 lots.

3. *Catalogue Of A Very Rare and Valuable Assortment of Coins and Medals, in Gold, Silver and Copper, The Property of E. Harrison Sanford, Esq. To be sold at auction by Messrs. Bangs, Merwin & Co., 656 Broadway, New York. On Friday, 27th November 1874.*

Catalogued by Edward Cogan. 20 pp., 367 lots.

4. *Catalogue of a Valuable and Interesting Collection of United States and Foreign Silver and Copper Coins and Medals, the property of a widow lady of Boston, Mass. To be sold at auction on the afternoon of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, January 25, 26, 27, 28, 1875. Commencing each day at two o'clock, by Messrs. Leavitt, Auctioneers, Clinton Hall, Astor Place, New York.*



Catalogued by John W. Haseltine. 78 pp., 2022 lots.

5. *Catalogue of Coins and Medals to be sold at Auction by Messrs. Bangs, Merwin & Company, 656 Broadway, New York, on Wednesday and Thursday, 16th and 17th December 1874.* The sale to commence at Four o'clock, P.M.

Catalogued by Edward Cogan. 48 pp., 875 lots.

6. *Catalogue of a Very Extensive and Valuable Collection of Gold, Silver and Copper Coins and Medals, of Various Countries.* The property of the late Ex-Governor Packer, of Pennsylvania, and sold by order of the Executors. The sale will take place at the Auction Rooms of Messrs. Bangs, Merwin & Co., 694 Broadway, N.Y., On Monday the 27th Feb. to the 3d March, 1871, inclusive, commencing each day at 5 o'clock, P.M.

Catalogued by Edward Cogan. 106 pp., 3018 lots.

7. *Catalogue of Valuable American Coins & Medals the property of Charles Clay, M.D. of Manchester, England, to be sold at auction, by Geo. A. Leavitt & Co., at their salesrooms, Clinton Hall, Astor Place, New York on Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday Evenings December 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1871. Sale to commence each day at 5 o'clock. Included is the Catalogue of a Complete Collection of the Isle of Man Currency, from its first to its latest issues, with Bank Notes and Money Cards, in connection with the Island, or Illustrative of the Triune by Charles Clay M.D. The most complete collection of the kind in the world, and one that cannot be formed again.*

Catalogued by W. H. Strobbridge. Sales prices penciled in for all Lots from 414 (The start of American Medals p. 36) to lot 1228 (p. 83).

The first page of the catalogue has a penciled note "Sold in a lot \$205. The "Books, Coins, Etc." section of the catalogue (pp. 96-97) have all the prices penciled in. 97 pp., 1356 lots.

8. *Catalogue of United States and Foreign Gold, Silver & Copper Coins, Medals, Tokens, Etc. to be Sold at Auction by Messrs. Thomas Birch & Son, No. 1110 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, January 13, 14 and 15, 1874, commencing at three o'clock P.M.*

Catalogued by John Haseltine. 48 pp., 1146 lots.

9. *Catalogue of A Collection of Coins, Autographs, Minerals and other Curiosities. Property of Francis T. Hagadorn, of Baltimore.* To be sold at auction by Messrs. Thomas Birch & Son, 1110 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, on Wednesday Afternoon, June 17, '74, commencing at three o'clock.

Catalogued by John Haseltine. 15 pp., 287 Lots.

All pages of the book are crisp and clean. My feeling is that the book was withdrawn from the Alfred University Library due to its age, and the seller came upon it, seeing it merely as an old book of little or no importance, decided they might make a couple of dollars by putting it up for action on the eBay.

I had this entire series of catalogues rebound in full black morocco with heavy marbled end sheets by the Heckman Bindery of North Manchester, Illinois at a cost of \$48.50.

My high bid on this item was \$20.80, plus \$5 to insure and ship it to me.

## Hidden Treasures in Old Literature

By David F. Fanning

I recently discovered a letter written in 1957 which proposes what must be one of the more unusual deals of which I have heard relating to numismatics or the collecting of paper currency. The letter is written on two sheets of small notepaper, in pencil. This shoddy presentation, coupled with the fact that there are a few stray notations of an irrelevant nature on the verso of each leaf, suggests that the copy I have found is a draft. For that reason, we may never know if the offer was actually made, much less whether it was accepted.

The author of the letter is Albert N. Hantem, of White Lake, South Dakota (many thanks go to Wayne Homren and Tom Sheehan for helping me verify this). It is addressed to William A. Philpott, Jr., of Dallas, Texas. Philpott was a currency collector who built a large collection featuring some important notes in very nice condition. The impetus behind the letter is a three-page advertisement Philpott took out in the December, 1957 issue of *The Numismatist* (pages 1468-1470), offering his collection for sale and listing a number of selections from it. He followed up this advertisement in subsequent issues sporadically through February 1959, using the pages of the ANA journal to publish what amounts to a very interesting fixed price list of material.

Although Hantem's talent for writing is at times lacking, I reproduce the letter verbatim:

Wm A Philpott Jr.  
Dallas Texas —

Dear Sir — Offering of your famous currency collection, about which I have read a great deal and I believe, which I saw

(partially) in Omaha of 55 convention, is a surprise, but I presume a great satisfaction to place same in your fellow collectors collections.

I was tremendously interested in the 50 & 100 notes of 1869 #30 and #31 —. At this time, I could not possibly raise these figures, however I realize they are worth every cent of your price. However, I do have a proposition which just might interest you, if not no harm done; however it may prove very profitable to you. I have a quarter of land — south & west of Beaumont Texas — approx. 20-25 miles in Jefferson County, section 177 — the SW — of sec 177.

I would make you a deal for a years oil lease on same for the two notes.

Would sincerely appreciate your word if at all interested or if you could pass it on. I assure you I certainly will be following your ads from now on, and sincerely hope to ad some of your exceptional notes to my own collection.

Very sincerely  
And every wish for success  
I am —  
A.N. Hantem,  
ANA 5011  
White Lake,  
S. Dak.

I found the note tucked away in my copy of the December 1957 issue of *The Numismatist*. The funny thing is that I've probably had this issue of the journal for at least a year, but hadn't yet had reason to refer to it. It wasn't until I pulled the issue off the shelf to check something else

that I noticed it came with an accompanying bonus text. I suppose this sort of thing happens fairly frequently. I often buy books, journals and the like which I know I won't be reading for some time as I'm busy with other projects. I may very well have gone another five years without having had reason to open the

issue, and during that time the letter would have remained unknown. Granted, in this case, that's not very significant: the letter is a curiosity at best. But who knows what gold may be waiting for you tucked away in an old magazine you haven't had reason to open? Check it out — you may be lucky enough to strike oil.

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## David Herman Brock

### 1926-2002

Just as this issue of *The Asylum* was going to press word came of the tragic death of David Herman Brock who served as editor of this journal from 1988 until 1991. David died on October 16, 2002 at Shands Medical Center at the University of Florida. He was born on April 7, 1926, the third of the five children of Dr. Herman H. and Edna Haft Block. His early childhood was spent in Michigan and the family moved to Fountain City, Tennessee, where he attended Smithwood Grammar School, Central High School and the University of Tennessee. After serving in Germany during the Second World War he resumed his education at Johns Hopkins University, earning a BA and an MA in Classical Languages. He continued studying at Columbia University and the American School in Rome. In 1956 he joined his parents in Gainesville where he was employed at the Tung Lab at the University of Florida. He went to Bogaloussa, Louisiana, with the Tung Lab but returned to Gainesville to work in the Agronomy Lab until his retirement in 1988.

David was an internationally known scholar and expert in Napoleonica, especially the Napoleonic Medals, and was a past President of La Societe Americaine pour l'etude de la Numismatique Francaise, a long time member of the American Numismatic Association, an honorary life member of Numismatics International (from both of which he received numerous honors for his exhibits and his articles). He had exhibited at every Collector's Day at the University of Florida Museum of Natural History since the inception until 2001. His last years were spent writing a massive site about his Napoleonic Medals which can be found at <<http://fortiter.napoleonicmedals.org>>

The officers and Board of Trustees of the NBS would like to encourage members to forward tributes and recollections of David Brock to Tom Fort or David Fanning for inclusion in the next issue of *The Asylum*.



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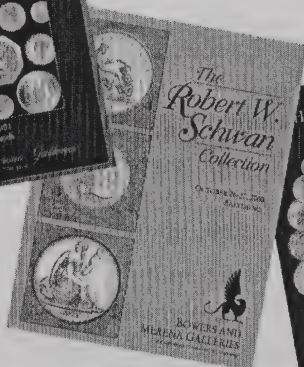
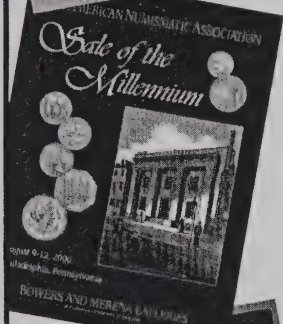
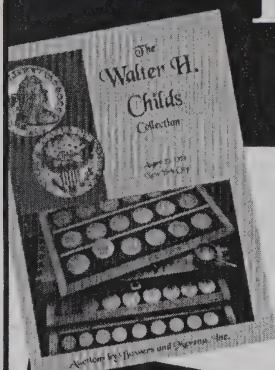
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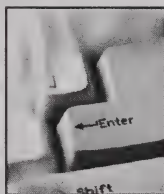
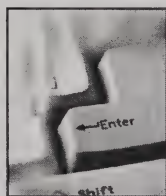
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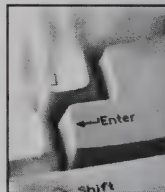
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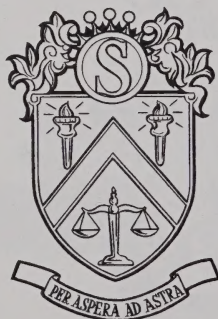
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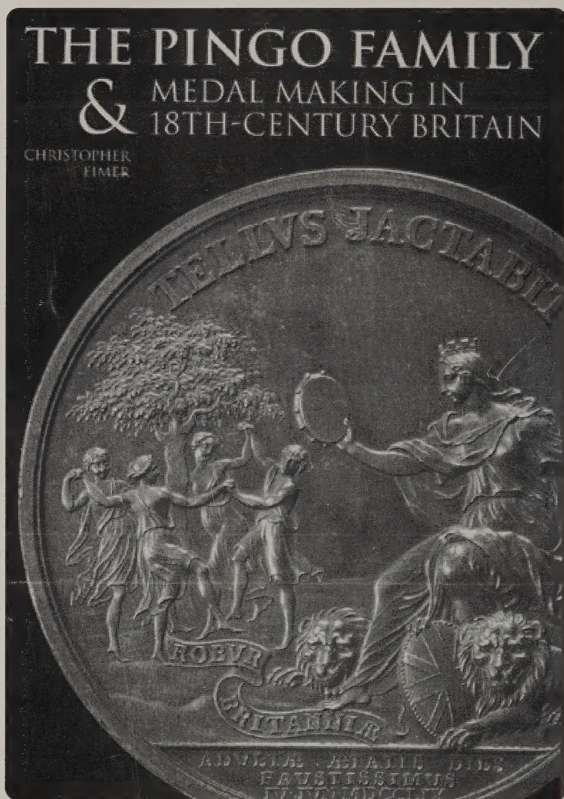
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